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MISCELLANIES,

VOL. II.:

ESSAYS, TRACTS OR ADDRESSES
MORAL AND RELIGIOUS.

BY

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LONDON:
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO., 1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.
NOTTINGHAM; STEVENSON, BAILEY, AND SMITH, PRINTERS.

M.DCCC.LXXXVII.

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PREFACE.

YEARS ago, in answer to private pressure for a continuous publication of pieces published separately or in magazines, great difficulty of judgment was experienced in selection. In general I resolved to reprint nothing that had not some permanent interest, and I tried to put together material for several volumes. It is still too copious. For the English public loves most, *first*, discussion of matters immediately pressing, *next* that which relieves from thought and amuses. Naturally, Volumes of my Miscellanies, if published, answer to *neither* description. Hence, whether other volumes are to follow, must remain uncertain. But regarding Morals and Religion as of *most* permanent interest, I now put this topic foremost.

F. W. N.

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ON THE EXISTENCE OF EVIL.

[1841.]

IT is impossible to extend inquiry and contemplation ever so little beyond the bounds of ordinary thought, without discerning how crude and untenable is the popular conception of divine Omnipotence. The child who is informed that God is Almighty, asks in great simplicity, why then does God let any body be unhappy? We may unhesitatingly deduce, that there is a real contrariety between the divine perfections, as conceived of by the child, and the existence of any evil. With the same logical force, though with more rudeness, some have alleged that the deity ought to have made man other than he is. Nor has the highest intellect and deepest piety ever essayed even to modify and relieve the difficulty, except by suggestions drawn from the topics of Optimism. It is said, "Perhaps the all-wise God sees that *it is best* so to be: he sees ends to be obtained, *which could not be obtained so well* in any other way; and which are valuable enough to deserve being bought at such a price." In different forms, this is substantially the meaning of all that the humble and pious can adduce. Whether learned or unlearned, philosophic or simple, the topic to which they refer us, is, "*Perhaps* the Allwise God saw that there was *no better way*."

A sentiment, even conjectural, which comes to us recommended by such authority, cannot be deemed rash and profane. If it is impious, what else is more pious? Is it not the zealous effort of piety to shelter and defend its own existence? It is, and whether it be a just sentiment or not, at any rate it is devotional and humble. And yet, let us examine what it virtually means. The evil which God has either ordained or permitted is partly moral and partly physical; yet this, it is suggested, was probably seen by him to be the best means of attaining some eminently good end. Now it cannot be intended to imply that he thinks slightly of moral evil; an idea subversive of reverence for his holy character, and degrading him into one who will employ wicked means to compass his purposes. It must remain, that the argument intends to say, that inscrutable limitations exist in the divine power, which could never have been suspected until the broad facts proclaimed it; so that the deity had to submit necessarily, at least for a time, to a state of things contrary to his mind, as an essential prerequisite towards the attaining of a glorious end beyond.

A recent essayist, whose work has attracted more than usual notice, the Rev. Henry Woodward, has forced prominently forward the fact, that nearly all our reasonings concerning the *Wisdom* of God imply some limitation of his power. To a being, Omnipotent in the gross and popular sense, wisdom must be wholly useless, and in fact becomes in him an unintelligible quality. As policy is superfluous to a conqueror who can apply overwhelming force, so is wisdom superseded by omnipotence. We admire the adaptation of lungs to air, and of air to the lungs, on the supposition that a difficult problem has been proposed,—how to free the blood from noxious particles? But if we are asked, "why might not the divine *fiat* have done it as well?" one reply alone is to be had,—that there are other objects to be gained by adhering to the general laws of matter, which objects *could not* have been so well gained by a direct exertion of divine power. If otherwise, there would be no intelligible wisdom in employing a circuitous, rather than a direct method of effecting the end. The like may be observed in every other case. Hence, wisdom and power are in one sense antagonistic qualities; the more you enlarge the sphere of the latter, the more you diminish that of the former; and every time we ascribe wisdom to the divine agent, we virtually imply some unknown limitation to his power, and deny the existence of almightiness in its vulgar sense.

To ignorant persons, who have imbibed with their devotional feelings the popular idea of omnipotence, it is apt to appear a profane thing to assert, that it is not within the power of the Almighty to recall the past; or, to construct a square which shall have the properties of a circle. But all thoughtful and philosophical minds have long been aware, that that which is self-contradictory does not lie within the sphere of power; and that it is no degradation to the Almighty that he cannot make the same thing both to be and not to be.

It being then certain, that limitations to the operations of his power may exist, and do exist, which the thoughtful of our race can discern, but of which the ignorant and unthinking are not aware; we may presume that other limitations possibly exist, which no human mind would guess at *à priori*, and which may, as yet, be concealed from all. And it has appeared, that an analysis of every argument which ascribes wisdom to the deity, manifests that there is a secret conviction in all religious minds of the *reality* of that which has just been called a presumption. Applying such principles to the creation of intelligent and free beings like man, we presently fall upon the conception, that to be able to love God, man needed to be able to hate him; if free to go right, man is free also to go wrong. At present it is enough to assert, that it is at least a plausible opinion that the two sorts of ability are inseparable. It is *not only* unproved that to create a being capable of holiness without being liable to sin, is within the sphere of divine power; but the *prima facie* aspect of the case is the reverse, tending to convince us that the very idea is as self-contradictory as that of a square circle. For when we try to analyse the notion of freedom, or indeed of holiness, we find it essentially implies a power of sin. For who would call a man honest, who had no natural power to be dishonest? or meek, who was physically unable to be angry? or humble, who could not help his humility? and so of all other moral excellences. Every one of them implies a *προαίρεσις* or *free choice;* and they not only could not be praised, but could not even exist; for it would not be a soul if there were no freedom. A liability to go wrong is then essentially inseparable from a capacity to go right, as much as convexity from concavity. They are little more than the same thing viewed from opposite sides. We do not praise a stone image of Xenocrates for temperance, for it cannot be gluttonous; and we do not blame a hog for gluttony or a fox for theft, for they are incapable of the virtues of temperance and of honesty.

Now if this does not wholly satisfy any one, let it be at least allowed that the opinion is not wholly imaginary or absurd, but that it has a measure of probability. That probability appears at once to be turned into practical certainty by the powerful testimony of matter of fact on the same side. We *do* find, to an amazing and appalling extent, moral disorder spread over the whole world as known to us; and the greatest difficulty is met in accounting for such a phenomenon within the realm of so beneficent and wise a ruler as we believe to superintend the earth. The fact forces on all pious contemplators the conviction, that, in some sense or other, *he could not help it*, consistently with the attaining of some paramount ends. If it is a physical difficulty which he could not overcome, that no doubt tends to degrade our conception of divine power; but if it is a metaphysical difficulty, not at all. On the contrary, our own minds are in fault for having invented an absurdity, and then proposed it as a problem for his power to effect. The latter is at once both the alternative to which the case itself points us, and that which preserves the honour of the divine attributes. It does then appear to have as much proof as have any of the received propositions of natural theology, that *to create a being capable of having a holy will, essentially implies the endowing him with a power to sin;* and that even almighty power cannot separate the two, since the idea is self-contradictory.

If this is conceded, the first great question pressing on us is; "whether the evils resulting from the creation of man, as a being capable of holiness, are so enormous, as to outweigh all the conceivable advantages." We cannot set aside this, by imagining some metaphysical necessity to have forced the deity to the creation of mankind; without falling into a system of mere fatalism. It would make out, that he is not our voluntary creator, but is himself a kind of tool or machine in the hands of destiny; and by breaking the moral connection between the creator and his creatures, would appear to subvert all intelligent piety. Nor indeed can the intellect approve such a conception, any more than does our devotional feeling; for what can be a more unmeaning phrase, than that God should create us by necessity, and without his own choice? Forced then to regard the act as chosen deliberately and voluntarily on his part, we cannot help urgently desiring some ground to believe, that the contingent evils thence resulting are slight in comparison with the good. To suppose either that he knew they would outweigh the good, or that his foresight was defective, and that he did not know how great they would prove, would grievously impair our conception either of the goodness or of the wisdom of God.

It is useless to deny that the doctrine of eternal misery, whether as popularly understood, or as philosophically explained, spreads an impenetrable cloud over the whole divine character. It matters not whether we conceive of God as exerting a direct act of judgment, to torture in everlasting flames the vast majority of the human race; or whether the wicked are to endure countless and never-ending agonies from accusing conscience and evil passions. The two doctrines possess in common the FACT of everlasting misery and everlasting sin, in appalling and ever increasing intensity; and this, to a vast majority of the children of Adam.

Even if the last point were omitted, yet if there be millions on whom this horrible lot would fall, the human heart seems incapable of conceiving how this awful evil can ever be a desirable purchase money for some greater good; but we are forced back on the inevitable persuasion, that it had been better that man had never been created. Nay, could we realize what eternal sin and eternal agony mean, perhaps we should conclude that such suffering and such moral evil to a single individual would be too great a price to pay for the everlasting blessedness and perfection of all the rest of our race. No generous mind,—or rather, no heart not harder than flint,—could desire to purchase for itself a heaven at the price of a hell to its brother; but would wish a thousand times over that not one of the family had ever come into existence. Such is the unconstrained utterance of ordinary human feeling; and if we are *not* to ascribe the like to the supreme creator, if we are to suppose his strength of mind such, that he does not flinch from bringing about the welfare of the few, by results so appalling to the many; devotion is crushed into superstition, and adoration ceases to be intelligent. No effort can be made to dispel the darkness resting on the character of the Most High, if the doctrine of eternal punishment, in the philosophical and exact sense of the term *eternal*, is true.

It is, however, certain, that one who is contemplating the facts of the world with the eye of a natural theologian, will not encumber himself with this doctrine. It is, if sanctioned by Christianity, a load to be supported by the credit of "revelation;" a new difficulty introduced, of which we know nothing from a contemplation of nature: and in this case it must be allowed, that so far from bringing us "good news," and clearing up the difficulties which distressed faith and perplexed intellect, Christ has brought us the worst news we could possibly have had, worse than the wildest misanthrope could have imagined, and has intensely aggravated all pre-existing perplexities, In short, whatever is the amount of evidence testifying to the truth of the Christian revelation, it might seem an obvious axiom that it is the duty of every good man, as it must be the impulse of every humane man, earnestly to hope that Christianity may turn out to be a fiction, rather than that this doctrine should be true: and this circumstance loads it with so enormous an improbability, as would suffice to overturn all intelligent faith in the doctrine, were it even far better supported by Scriptural evidence than it is.

Supposing then that this doctrine is set aside, let us recur to the question, whether evil (physical and moral) may not ultimately prove a sort of evanescent quantity, in comparison to the good. The first step towards this will assuredly be taken, if it is believed that *the evil is temporary, the good eternal.* Now, to this, the general spirit of the Christian Scriptures strongly testifies; nor are there wanting special texts bearing on this result. All sin is regarded as of the nature of *corruption;* and is counted as "of this age;" while all righteousness and goodness is regarded as both coming down from God, and as partaking of his nature, which is incorruption and eternity. To the same conclusion both conscience and philosophy point. From the very necessity of the case, inexperience appears to draw after it errors; we make allowance for the indiscretions of youth; we should think it inhuman to wish a man to be punished to his dying day for his early offences. Moreover, the punishment which they draw after them has a very perceptible tendency to correct and improve the man. It would be unwise to desire that sin should not tend to bring after it misery; for it would be to lose a wholesome instructor: but as we must wish the punishment to be only in due measure, and to cease after it has annihilated that of which it was the chastisement, so we have the testimony of experience, that this is ordinarily the case. Man being himself finite, his sin is not infinite in its effects on others, nor on himself; and if not always remediable, yet it tends to self-exhaustion. All virtue and goodness, being self-consistent, strengthen continually with growth: but vices in every shape are opposed to one another, and though occasionally they may strengthen each other, the contrary happens far oftener. Indeed, in different men, vices are in the long run obviously and surely opposed, and wear each other out in many ways. Now the fact is (however it may be explained) that man comes into this world with intellect and conscience wholly unformed, and he has to be built up into a moral and spiritual being. It would be more reasonable to expect a person to be able to swim before entering the water, than to expect a human being to learn to go right, without ever going wrong. But if in manhood we look back with a smile and without pain at the sorrows of childhood, so also do we look back without shame or remorse at the peevishness, greediness, impatience, or other follies incident to that age; nay, nor does any sound minded man feel humbled at the faults of youth, when they are merely the necessary defects of that age, and not his own personal and peculiar transgressions—I mean, such defects as the being too sanguine and ardent, hasty and imprudent, too ready to form friendships and trust strangers, too vehement in love and in expectation, somewhat too confident of one's own opinion. Just in proportion as any of these were a voluntary transgression, they will call for and produce humiliation, but no further. But again, whatever may have been our past sufferings, yet when at last we obtain honourable and permanent repose, the remembrance of them is rather pleasant; and if they have brought us spiritual improvement, we may well count them a real good. No amount then of mere outward suffering, not connected with our own sin, during this short life, need cause the slightest difficulty in our present argument. All evil is ultimately annihilated, in comparison with the good. As concerns the moral evil in which each of us may have been involved, no one can repine and justly regret, if the fire which burns in the soul from this cause is fierce and gnawing. If remorse do its work, and the man learn to go softly all his days in the bitterness of his soul; he will only the better learn that sin stingeth as a serpent and biteth as an adder. In fact, as regards the mass of mankind, perhaps no wise man would desire to have the tormenting power of remorse lessened. Nevertheless, as in the case of slight transgressions,—an unkind word—a proud thought—a selfish neglect of another—there is a soothing of the conscience, when contrition has wrought its results,—confession and restitution; so of greater offences there may be a genial repentance, quite unlike mere remorse, and where there is, some ultimate lesson may be taught both to the offender himself and to others: and though it is not to be imagined that it is better for him to have gone wrong, than to have been both wise enough and good enough to go right, yet his sin may in the end be a mere process of rising higher; just as the false notes on a violin are but a state of transition towards better play. Hence even the worst cases of guilt become reconcilable with the divine wisdom in ordaining the present scene of things: for in short, though all are transgressors, yet at the worst one portion is led on towards moral perfection and consequent happiness; and another portion, if it does not attain this, yet at some period ceases to exist. No difficulty arises, except on the belief that the sin and misery of the latter is unsubdued and everlasting. Exclude this conception;—believe that goodness alone is eternal; and it remains clearly intelligible, how the divine wisdom may have ordained, on the one hand, that man should gain a stable independent holy will, so as to be capable of friendship with his infinite creator; but that, on the other hand, this essentially demanded that he should be left free to sin, and consequently moral evil has abounded and abounds, but only for a time. Sin and its effects, remorse and misery, are to be abolished, and the fruit of holiness shall flourish to everlasting life.

But it will be inquired, is not this, after all, to maintain, that the holy God uses base and unholy means to work out his designs? Does it not confound our sense of moral distinctions, and make evil to be good when it tends to a good end, if the view above given is correct? This objection exerts a force that is hard to account for upon many minds; for it does not seem to have any intrinsic weight. It might seem to have been borrowed from the barbaric reasoning of King Agamemnon in Homer, or from a bye-gone Predestinarian school, whose doctrine annihilated all human agency, and imputed to the deity the acts of all men. Certainly such a doctrine makes it impossible to defend the moral character of our creator. If vice and cruelty are bad, and he is as truly responsible for their existence, as though he were the immediate agent, there is an end of reasoning. The tyrant may justify himself, by saying, that when he oppresses, he is only the tool by which God scourges men. But the first principle of all intelligent worship recognizes in ourselves a power to resist the will of God, which constitutes *sin* against him. It is in extravagant inconsistency with this first principle, to imagine that because God gives us the power to sin, therefore God ordains the sin and is responsible for it. If with reverence we may use the phrase, we may say that he *is* responsible for the *general result* of investing us with such a power. Consistently with goodness and wisdom, he must have foreseen that in the long-run this arrangement was beneficent; then it surely may co-exist with a fixed hatred of moral evil. A wise father will give his son an allowance of pocket money, in order that he may learn to spend judiciously: and even when he sees him about to employ it foolishly, he will not check him, deeming it better that he should learn by experience, than by dictation. Without alleging that the cases are *perfectly* parallel, this suffices to put into a clear light the fact, that to make a beneficial disposal of affairs, well knowing that the parties so invested with power will partially abuse it, is quite consistent with the purest disapproval of such abuse. All that is needed to justify him who so ordains, is, a clear belief that in no other way will so good a total result be gained.

In this light we must look on the men who are generally regarded as the scourges of mankind. Who can read without shuddering the atrocities of a Timour or an Attila? Indeed, in the latter, it appears less frightful from his very savageness. We judge of him as a wild beast, rather than as a man. But Timour was a legislator and a would-be reformer. Alexander the Great was eminent for political intellect. Our question, however, is not, What are we to think of the *men?* but, How are we to vindicate the divine providence which permits their action? It does not seem to be difficult, after the above. Indeed, an Attila may be classed with earthquakes or volcanoes; fearful visitations not caused by moral evil; and no one who holds that these physical evils are consistent with divine goodness (partly as the results of good laws impressed on nature, partly as directly remedial) will find much difficulty in believing the same of Attila. But we may go further. Not only is it certain that we should injure man's nature, if we could wholly extinguish ambition; certain, that the flame which in Alexander or Napoleon burned to intense and baneful fury, is in its milder forms quite essential to man's welfare: but it is credible, that, if we did but know the alternative possibilities (which we never can know), we might find that the permanent good effected (blindly) by Alexander, by Julius Cæsar, by Napoleon, far more than out-balances their evil. We may even venture to believe, that, until mankind is otherwise more perfect, it is beneficial on the whole that men of unbridled ambition do exist, and will exist. This is God's great influence for fusing into one the separated tribes of the human race by conquest; the method by which the superior energies and talents of one nation are ultimately diffused over another: and although it produces countless miseries on the way, inasmuch as the conquerors are not *aiming* at good or concerned to use virtuous methods (and this is their sin), yet an extensive survey of human history will convince any well-judging mind, that our race would never have attained its present elevation or its present prospects of improvement, if ambition had always been thwarted before it could overflow in conquest.

It is striking to contemplate the analogy offered us in the whole field of nature, as to *the slow progresss* of whatever is to be *ultimately great.* In the botanical world it has been long proverbial, that vast growths are slow; and the discoveries of geology magnificently illustrate the saying. But there is another aspect from which the same facts may be viewed. In one sense, the material universe may be called always the same. Having the same repulsions and attractions and the same material masses, only the same phenomena (it might seem) must for ever recur, did not *organic life* break in to disturb the monotony. The influx of vegetable forms introduces wonderful variety; yet each vegetable in itself is, within near limits, ever like itself; nor does any improvement in the individual, nor much in the species, take place. Moral growth is the last and most complicated of organic growths. If ferns took many thousand years to perfect themselves, it is but little to allow a hundred thousand years to man.

CHARLES SUMNER
ON
THE GRANDEUR OF NATIONS.

[1845.]

ABRIDGED FROM THE "PROSPECTIVE REVIEW," No. VII., 1846.

WHEN we consider at how recent a time most unnatural and deadly hostilities with the United States of North America threatened this country, and how few among our Trans-Atlantic kinsmen dared to lift up their voices against the warlike spirit which had unhappily attained a political predominance, we feel that a debt of gratitude is owing to every American citizen who in the last year publicly protested in favour of peace, and denounced the profligate and inhuman spirit of territorial aggrandizement. Mr. Sumner spoke with an immediate practical object, and with the actual position of the United States filling his view. This alone enables us to forgive his extravagant overstatements and oftentimes fanatical declamation. But because of the extreme importance of the subject, we deprecate all overstatement of the argument; for this occasions a waste of moral power and of valuable enthusiasm on the part of the advocates of peace, lays them open to the dangerous, because just, assaults of ridicule, and alienates from their co-operation thousands of humane, able, but practical men. We exceedingly differ from Mr. Sumner as to his invidious interpretation of the term *national honour*, which he wishes to explode altogether. The case is, we submit, exactly the same as with personal honour. There are coxcombs and bullies, who often fancy they are insulted, and pick a quarrel in defence of what they call their honour; but we cannot infer that there is no such thing as dishonour to be feared from too passive a submission to injury. If a man is walking in the street with his wife, and a ruffian attacks her, we hold that it would be a deep dishonour in him not to defend her, and if occasion required, he must defend her with as much "boar's" or "lion's might" as he can summon into his frame. Mr. Sumner injures his case by the superfluity of learning, with which he proves from Homer and Shakespeare that a man in battle degrades himself into a wild beast. Of course he does. Though it is a great misfortune, he must so do, if he is to fight at all: and that this is sometimes a duty, Mr. Sumner does not deny. That a policemen must fight against robbers, a sloop of war against pirates, he allows without reserve. But to return. As honour may force a man to fight in defence of his wife or of his child, so may honour force a powerful State to go to war for the protection of its dependencies or subjects. The weaker the object defended, the stronger is the appeal to honour. Mr. Sumner therefore by no means gains from the argument, "Of what *use* has the war been?" as if rescue from attack and security for the future, were not sufficient use.—To take his own illustration. Some five-and-thirty years ago, France, being at war with England, exercised her belligerent right (as the phrase is) of hindering neutral powers from trading with England. The English retaliated, with far greater power to enforce their determination by sea; and the neutrals, one and all, suffered severe losses in their trade. The weaker States at once withdrew from the effort, but the spirit of America did not so easily submit to what she regarded as the dictation of England, and when her merchant ships fell into the hands of our cruisers, a new mortification awaited her in our claiming *our own* seamen, as many as we found on board of her vessels. This was not an intentional aggression upon her, but a natural and consistent proceeding on our part, when, through want of seamen, we were violently impressing our own people at home. But the Americans have made a law, without consulting us, that any persons (*British subjects* or others) who reside a certain time among them, are their citizens: and consequently it was impossible for us to reclaim our men without offending their national pretensions. Besides this, no skill on the part of our officers could save them from seizing native members of the republic, children of those whose independence we had acknowledged, by mistake for British subjects; and considering the despotic power which our captains possessed, and our strong demand for sailors, there can be little doubt that we really impressed many genuine American citizens. We have recounted the case thus at large, to show how complicated and difficult it was. Mr. Sumner informs us, that "the greatest number of American seamen ever officially alleged to be compulsively serving in the British navy was about eight hundred," and infers, that his country ought not to have made war upon us for anything *so small.* We do not understand this arithmetic. To us it seems to be a question of principle, depending on its liability to repetition, as well as on the moral features of the case. If we had landed on the coast of Rhode Island, and carried off five hundred seamen to serve as sailors, Mr. Sumner surely holds that a war to recover them or to forbid repetition of the outrage would be *defensive;* yet he might still urge that it was better to allow five hundred men to be made slaves, and say no more about it, than "doom the whole country for three years to the blight of war." "Our commerce," says he, "was driven from the seas; the resources of the land were drained by taxation; villages on the Canadian frontier were laid in ashes; the metropolis of the Republic was captured, while gaunt distress raged everywhere within our borders." Finally, America was glad to make peace with us, when our contest against France was terminated, without obtaining on our part any guarantee or promise that we would not renew our impressments, if like circumstances should recur. From this Mr. Sumner proves by the confession of his own government, whose words he quotes, that "The United States had appealed to arms in vain:" but this does not convince us that the war was really in vain. America ought not to have attacked us: this we most assuredly believe; but not because eight hundred men were too small a consideration. If neutrality was impossible, a far more reasonable and just conduct would have been to declare war against France,—whose decrees had been the first offence,—after stipulating with us, that we should abandon our claims of impressment in case of her so doing. But she remembered with gratitude the aid given her by France against us, and she despised us as a beaten foe,* and little did she imagine that while our main efforts were engaged against our neighbouring antagonist, we could by a left-hand stroke, and without any loss sensible to ourselves, inflict on a trans-Atlantic power sufferings so severe; sufferings, the effect of which were felt for many years by an infantine republic. Her passions impelled her into that war, and this was the fault. She did not make allowance for our difficulties, and *for the sincere intentions* of our government to claim none but our own seamen. But we say, if we had knowingly and manifestly carried off eight hundred native Americans; if we had refused redress, and shown a disposition to repeat the offence, the smallness of the number is not to the purpose. The national *honour* is involved in protecting individuals and weak dependencies; and if this is a mere name, then Virtue and Justice are mere names.

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* We could not conquer our colonists *at first,* because we were too merciful to proceed to extremities; like the Dutch against Brussels: *at last,* because the great Whig party, in jealousy of the increasing powers of the Crown, would not allow of a conquest which it would need a powerful standing army to hold.

Nor is it true that America gained *nothing;* although what she gained would probably have been purchased more cheaply by greater wisdom and moderation: but she has prominently brought forward the rights of neutrals, so as either to hinder future European war, or, at least to make it less mischievous to neutral countries. Powerful States, when involved in war, treat "belligerent rights" as the only ones which deserve consideration. This might be correct, if a war were decreed against an offending power by the judicial sentence of a tribunal which represented the interests of all the great nations of the world. In such case, the neutrals would be really or virtually represented in the Congress; or at any rate, they would be situated as individuals in a community, whose neighbour falls under the sentence of the law to their great inconvenience. My lawyer may be arrested for a crime, when his aid is of the utmost importance to me; or my banker may be suspected of holding forged notes, and a seal may be put on his whole establishment; and meanwhile, I cannot get money to pay my creditors. Now in fact, the war against Napoleon, though not decreed by a Congress, was more decidedly than any war in all European history, waged by the will and sentence of all the other nations of Europe,—(except unhappy Poland, who hoped restitution from him!) and this was a new ground why America ought to have borne her wrongs and losses from us more meekly. Not but that we were probably overbearing enough, when we could appeal to Grotius, Puffendorf, &c., on belligerent rights; for these great writers (we understand) treat every independent State as having an undoubted right, of its own judgment, to decree war on any other State, and then to expect from neutrals tame submission to any amount of loss, which may be requisite for an efficient prosecution of the war. The most common form of it is in the stoppage of maritime commerce. A more horrible illustration is in the blockade of Genoa, of which Arnold, and now Mr. Sumner, have given so affecting details. We say that *something has been gained* by the American Union, inasmuch as England in any future war will remember how dangerous it is to confiscate all neutral rights.

A like view, we think, must be taken in retrospect of the other calamitous wars which have been waged, especially in the last two or three centuries. They were shocking and hateful: most of them were caused by guilt or ignorance on both sides, and they are not for a moment to be defended: yet they have not been *fruitless*. Mr. Sumner says :—

"The fruitlessness and vanity of war appear in the results of the great wars by which the world has been lacerated. After long struggles, in which each nation has inflicted and received incalculable injury, peace has been gladly obtained on the basis of the condition of things before the war; *status ante bellum*."—p. 13.

In other words, the resistance has effected all that it aimed at. When this happens, the war has fulfilled a great service, though perhaps at a dreadful price. It has manifested the impossibility of foreign conquest, and has, under severe penalties, taught each nation to tolerate the existence of its neighbour. This is a fundamental condition, without which there can be no permanent stability of anything good or great. The dreadful contests for empire which have desolated Europe in past ages, are the price paid by past generations for the brighter hopes of the present: and however horrible the details of battle, (such as Mr. Sumner has amassed in hope of appalling men who have little realized what war means), yet history declares that the permanent evils produced by war, when conquest does *not* follow, are slight in comparison to those inflicted by unjust laws and foreign government.

The incessant wars of the Greek republics did not hinder their increasing in numbers, wealth and strength; so that in Demosthenes' day Greece was stronger in men and money and in all physical supplies than she had ever been: but from the moment she lost her liberty under Alexander the Great, she began to decline, being so drained of her young men for Asiatic armies, that the Romans found her greatly emaciated: and the fall which domestic tyrannies had begun, a purely foreign despotism rapidly precipitated. Precisely the same remarks apply to Italy, which has twice over had the same experience. Abounding in population in its early times of turbulence, it became comparatively a desert after Roman conquest. Again in the middle ages it became flourishing, warlike and famous; but under despotism it sunk into a weakness which war habitually at the doors had not been able to inflict. So too, the wars of the French revolution during seven years of unparalleled exertion left France more prosperous than they found her: and after the gigantic efforts of fourteen years more under a despotism which with all its severity was popular, France though exhausted was immeasurably better off than under Louis XVI. Before her great revolution, disastrous as were her wars, these were not her worst curse, but the laws which forbade industry and pampered idle licentiousness.

Viewed as an argument on the general question of War, we deprecate *as irrelevant* the hideous pictures of human misery consequent on a battle, as tending to impress the passions and bias the judgment. Those miseries are short, and affect but a small fraction of a population. They are seldom to be set in the balance of reason against the evils of losing national independence; yet they affect the imagination more, because so many sharp sufferings are brought into a heap and placed in open day.

With the inconsistency which pervades his whole address, Mr. Sumner, who approves of defence against pirates, quotes with high approbation the following sentimental tale from Mrs. Child's Letters from New York [Note F., p. 98], on which we intend to ground various remarks:—

"I have somewhere read of a regiment ordered to march into a small town and take it. I think it was in the Tyrol: but wherever it was, it chanced that the place was settled by a colony who believed the Gospel of Christ, and proved their faith by works. A courier from a neighbouring village informed them that troops were advancing to take the town. They quietly answered, 'If they will take it, they must.' Soldiers soon came riding in, with colours flying, and fifes piping their shrill defiance. They looked round for an enemy, and saw the farmer at his plough, the blacksmith at his anvil, and the women at their churns and spinning wheels, babies crowed to hear the music, and the boys ran out to see the pretty trainers, with feathers and bright buttons, the harlequins of the nineteenth century: of course none of these were in a proper position to be shot at. 'Where are your soldiers?' they asked.—'We have none,' was the brief reply. 'But we have come to take the town.'—'Well, friends; it is before you.' 'But is there nobody to fight?'—'No, we are all Christians.' Here was an emergency altogether unprovided for; a sort of resistance which no bullet could hit; a fortress perfectly bomb-proof. The commander was perplexed. 'If there is nobody to fight with, of course we cannot fight,' said he, 'it is impossible to take such a town as this.' So he ordered his horses' heads to be turned about, and they carried the human animals out of the village, as guiltless as they entered, and perchance somewhat wiser. This experiment on a small scale indicates how easy it would be to dispense with armies and navies, if men only had faith in the religion which they profess to believe. When France lately reduced her army, England immediately did the same; for the existence of one army creates the necessity for another, unless men are safely ensconced in the bomb-proof fortress above mentioned."

So many and different thoughts crowd upon us, on considering the truth and error, the good and bad tendencies,* mingled in this passage, that we have difficulty in disentangling them, so as not to mislead a reader as to our own sentiments. We have an unlimited faith in the power of pure moral influence, consistently exerted through an adequate length of time, to subdue brute force and passion, and assume a kind of divine authority. But in order that moral force may be as influential as the tale implies, it must ordinarily have been in exercise for a long time, and by its consistency and permanence have won respect and admiration. The immediate effect of such conduct as is described, on gross and hard natures, is to produce mere surprize and contempt, and, if leisure permit, a wanton wish to make practical trial whether the non-resistance is genuine or is a mere pretence. Happy exceptions there may be, as in the behaviour of the grave and noble-minded children of North America towards Penn and his followers, (whose superiority in all art and knowledge is not to be left out in reckoning the forces which acted on the Indian mind,) but as a general rule, infinite experience proves, that to conquer violence by pure moral influence is *a process of intense suffering* to those who undertake it. An individual strong in faith and deliberately choosing for himself the course of the martyr, as the highest mode of acting, may consistently oppose meekness and passiveness to raging passion; and if, as it is probable, he should be cut off prematurely, he often purchases a milder lot for his successors, should kindred spirits follow in his steps. Thus the Moravians and the Quakers in their earlier generations underwent severe persecution, until the persecutor gave up his attempts;—in the same spirit as a man who should have tried to train cats to guard the house like a dog, after flogging and killing a dozen of the poor animals, would at last desist, and having learned the cat's nature, be satisfied to leave it a cat. Just so the great powers of the world have come to look on Moravians, and similar sects, as a sort of female population, and no longer dream of forcing them into battle: but they nevertheless take possession of them and of their property, and whenever occasion requires, know how to make them useful for military purposes. It is a great mistake to suppose that any softening moral influence has been felt, from conduct which appears to them only a whimsical fanaticism. If Mrs. Child's story is true, the military commander had, just then, other work on his hand; and thought it needless to lose his time upon a population, all of whose good things might at any moment be leisurely secured.

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* It is obvious that these townsmen are supposed totally indifferent to the tie of country, unconscious of duties towards a king and fellow-citizens, and willing to be transferred to the hands of every potentate in turn. But it is impossible to notice more than a fraction of what is here to be said.

But we deeply object to the tone of the narrator and the moral which she deduces, because it tends to make men imagine that the path she recommends is easy and comfortable, instead of being the path of martyrdom: this is a most grave fault. Moreover, whether it would be lawful for a community tamely to endure that which wanton invaders have ten thousand times inflicted on a helpless population, we hold to be more than doubtful, except where non-resistance should be dictated by manifest physical weakness, and where an opposite conduct would only exasperate.

Mr. Sumner indeed furnishes us with a business-like proof from real life, that non-resistance is the safest and most comfortable, as well as cheapest, method. He quotes, as decisive, a passage from Mr. Jay, which it is hardly worth while to reproduce.

Those who with Messrs. Jay and Sumner suppose national non-resistance to be a cheap and comfortable mode of safety, ought to prove, that if no police force existed, and no magisterial authority were even pretended, (which is the international position,—unfortunately,) the unarmed individual would *then* be safer than the armed. Every great and civilized nation is (compared with savages) industrious and unwarlike, and its vast wealth makes it a mark for savage cupidity. If we can conceive for a moment a nation like England acting on the non-resisting principle, she would be a bait to spoilers, just as was the Roman Empire in its decline to the Northern barbarians, when imperial jealousy kept the provincials unarmed, and sudden reasons of

State called the imperial armies away. Many an innocent town-population was then massacred in cold blood by a sudden incursion. The infinite riches of the provinces lured the eagle from afar, and the taste of prey did but whet the appetite.—That was an awful experiment, on a prodigious scale, of the intense misery that civilized nations, when unarmed, suffer from barbarians. But what have we, civilized Europeans, in recent times, ourselves *inflicted* on savages or on one another? Unhappily there is no want of historical illustrations. When Ovando and his Spaniards had landed in Hispaniola, the native Queen Anacoana welcomed him, though a perfect stranger, with the warmest friendship. After he had received her hospitality and festivity for some days, he suddenly seized all her chief men and burned them alive; and having carried her off in chains, subjected her to a mock trial before Spanish judges, who had her publicly hanged. Avarice was the horrible vice of the Spaniards, but another, yet more shameful to name, is habitual to a soldiery, long restrained from female society. A town which calmly welcomes in a band of soldiers, perhaps of ruffians, ought to calculate on the possibility, that the chief officers will pick out the fairest maidens or matrons, and summon them to share their beds. What would parents think of their passive behaviour, if they found their male children carried off, some to be mutilated for the harem, others to be trained in warfare, and their most beautiful daughters to be sold as concubines;— one and all to be separated from Christian influences for ever, and to be educated in a foreign religion or forced to assume its externals. Nay, the whole population may be sold into slavery, and any of them constrained to subserve the crimes or sins of their lords; perhaps, as some Helot, to follow him to battle, carry his armour, tend his horses.

Mr. Sumner, we suppose, will reply, Such things cannot happen *now*, in *Christian* nations. Yet now men called Christians pay for invading the villages of unhappy Africa, and carry off her sons into slavery. It is evident that if they dared, and if it suited them, the same men would equally tear away Spaniards, Germans, or Englishmen, from their homes, families, country and religion, *if it paid them*. Is any one so childish as to doubt, whether it is the cannons and bayonets of Europe, which repel the slave-dealer and kidnapper from her shores? Why, it is a recent tale, within living memory, that Algerine and Greek pirates prowled about the Mediterranean coasts for Christians to sell as slaves at Constantinople or Morocco. The armies and navies of Christendom, not Christian love and submission, have put down this horrible practice; and those who counsel the dismantling of fortresses, and disapprove all forcible resistance to violent invasion, must lay their account for a renewal of such atrocities. Granted that an individual of strong mind may choose the martyr's life for himself, he has no right to choose it for others; for his children, not yet of age to know the horrors in store for them: or for his neighbours, some of whom fail in courage when they discern what is coming. Indeed, the real problem, as it is found in life, is this: How are the able-bodied and youthful to act, when the feeble by age and sex implore their aid; when the brave men also, who are venturing their own lives in defence, claim that all who can assist, shall assist against lawless atrocity? If there is not entire concord in the innocent population, the few who resist bravely will exasperate the assailants to greater cruelty; and all semblance of the fair picture so praised by Mr. Sumner will vanish. A most essential fallacy is hidden in Mrs. Child's quiet remark, that "the experiment on a small scale indicates" what ought to be done in a nation at large. The concord in being willing *to suffer* which is not quite impossible in an enthusiastic sect, is simply impossible in an entire nation. The great majority will be depraved, not exalted, by the ordeal of martyrdom.

The persecution which the Christian Church endured under Decius and Galerian, only prepared it to covet earthly power, and to use that power harshly against its adversaries. The sufferings endured by Protestants made the English cruel towards Roman Catholics. The martyr-spirit belongs to very few, and nothing can be more mischievous than for those few to press the multitude into a position for which they have no faith.

We have thus at length urged the grounds which sometimes make *defensive war* a duty; because the opposite sentiment is a growing fanaticism, fostered by ignorance of the world, and plausible to young and tender natures. We do not thank Mr. Sumner for his concessions on this head, when we find them all neutralized and refuted by his arguments.

While thus forced to approve of defence, we are utterly averse to the compact according to which a soldier or sailor enters service. He is expected to fight in any war to which any Prime Minister may send him, however strong his conviction that it is unjust and aggressive. Theoretical means may be suggested of avoiding this difficulty; but it is certain that they will not be adopted, as long as our recruiting-sergeants can pick up able-bodied youths who have no scruples; nor does the least indication appear that our aristocratic officers feel any difficulties of conscience on these heads.

Mr. Sumner, with others, has a vague feeling, but has not distinctly pointed out what it is that makes war a very improper mode of obtaining "redress of grievances." He has indeed the following remark:—

"The object proposed in 1834 (on the part of the United States) by war with France, was, to secure the payment of five millions of dollars. It would be madness to term this a case of self-defence. It has been happily said:—'If, because a man refuses to pay a just debt, I go to his house and beat him, that is not self-defence':—but such was precisely the conduct proposed to be adopted by our country."

The direct process in such a case is the barbarian one, of landing on the foreigner's coast and carrying off property; which is either detained as a pledge for the repayment due, or else sold to indemnify creditors and defray the expense of capture. This barbarian fashion appears to us in principle far preferable to declaring war; because in the latter case, *in return for a limited injury, an unlimited punishment is inflicted*, and on innocent parties; than which no wrong can be more execrable.—An obstinate or foolish French Minister refuses to pay American subjects their dues. In consequence, the Americans think they are justified in blowing up innocent French merchant ships, and, if occasion offer, laying French towns in ashes; a remedy disproportionate to the disease. But, in fact, if a modern State attempted to redress its pecuniary wrongs by a barbarian foray, it would have to calculate on retaliation; and not knowing on what part of its extensive dominions the retaliation would fall, it would need to keep up an entire war establishment for defence. This would more than swallow up the value of the property withheld, and would be utterly absurd, unless it could hope to make the other party pay this expense also; which undoubtedly could not be done except by a war on a large scale. For these reasons we fully agree with Mr. Sumner, that the truly dignified and politic way of behaving under pecuniary fraud, if it refer to a past transaction and has a limit, is to bear it, but with protest to other powers, and some separation of amity, such as may be felt.

No candid reader (it is trusted) can have read our comments without seeing that we utterly abjure the warlike spirit, and deplore war, under all circumstances, as a cruel and dreadful infliction. If we have occupied ourselves chiefly in vindicating *some* Resistance, and not in extolling Peace, or re-echoing the condemnation of battle-loving propensities, it is because the latter topic is superfluous to all except those whose greatness or gains arise from other men's sufferings. Upon these an angel's eloquence would be lavished in vain. It would rejoice us to see a Christian abhorrence of rapacity and violence influential over the world at large; but of this we despair, until the Christian Peace-party shall avoid the extravagances which we have been pointing out. To justify *some* wars of defence, is the first condition requisite for that soundness of view and power of Truth, by which the lovers of Peace must triumph.

ON THE CHRISTIAN LAW OF DIVORCE.

[1858.]

THE position assumed by a notably large part of the Anglican clergy against the re-marriage of a divorced woman is singularly opposed to that of our laity, and as it may appear, highly unreasonable. It rests on a very narrow basis of apparent verbal authority; nay, as I believe, on a total mistake of the question put to Jesus by his disciples and of the reply elicited from him.

The Jewish husband notoriously had the right of divorcing his wife without the intervention of any Court or Public Officer, at his own mere will; just as has the Mussulman husband now, only under the restriction of restoring the wife's dowry and personal ornaments. Indeed the ancient Latin husband had the same arbitrary right; he had only to say: "Take thine own property to thyself," and it was a legal divorce. The Jewish husband was used to utter some vague formula, such as: "I have found uncleanness in thee," which might mean much or nothing; and this sufficed to warrant his action. The disciples, we are told, accordingly asked Jesus, whether it was *right* for a husband at his own single will to divorce a wife *for every cause; i. e.*, "quamvis ob causam;" for *any or every* cause, whatever he judged sufficient. The question evidently had no allusion to a Court of of Law, and its legitimate power of divorce. Jesus simply replied, that *one* cause and *one only* justified the husband in the use of this legal power; viz., if the wife were unfaithful to his bed. In Matt. xix. 9, the words are explicit; and cannot be overborne by the vaguer version given elliptically in Mark x., where this unique reason which justified the husband in taking the law (as we call it) into his own hands, is omitted. Naturally and reasonably, where no adequate ground exists for divorce, Jesus condemns re-marriage with another; but this cannot in any case affect the duty of a Court of Law or National Legislative Body to enact fit grounds of Divorce and also of Re-marriage. Gentile Christians are not under the Mosaic Law. For one who avows the strictest submission to the authority of Jesus, there is nothing in his reply beyond a disapproval of arbitrary divorce at the wilful pleasure of a husband. *Our* law gives to a husband absolutely no such power; therefore his reply can in no way concern us.

THE RELIGIOUS WEAKNESS OF PROTESTANTISM.

[1858.]

IT is humiliating to every Protestant to look on the map of Europe, and see the vast surface which is covered by Catholicism, and the numerical weakness of its nobler adversary. In less than forty years from its feeble origin, Protestantism made its widest European conquests; and thenceforward began to recede, nor ever again recovered the lost ground. Through the whole of the eighteenth century Protestant doctrine might have been preached with little molestation in the greater part of Europe, yet nowhere did it extend itself. Neither in Ireland, where a victorious Government was long bent to reduce Catholicism by severe and unjust law (in which they were far less successful than Catholic kings in their bigoted violences); nor in France, where unbelief laid the national religion prostrate and stripped the Church of its revenues; nor in the dominions of the Emperor Joseph II., who resolutely put down Romish pretensions, while remaining in communion with the Church; nor even in his kingdom of Hungary, where the two religions co-existed in much good-will; nor under the Prussian monarchy, and elsewhere in Germany; nor in Tuscany, under the enlightened Leopold II.;—in short, nowhere at all has Protestantism, *even while she had a fair field and leave to speak the truth*, been able to win anything perceptible on the field of history from her Papal antagonist. We submit, that this is a phenomenon too broad, too uniform, too decidedly marked, for any reasonable man to pass by as insignificant. And it is the more remarkable, because side by side with this religious weakness, Protestantism has more and more displayed its political and social superiority. Notoriously the Protestant cantons of Switzerland are superior in industry, neatness, and abundance to the Catholic cantons of the same land; while climate, soil, and race are the same. A similar distinction has often been observed between Catholic and Protestant farmers in Ireland. England, the largest Protestant State in Europe, has been the richest and perhaps the best ordered country, certainly that which stretches its power farthest.

Nowhere else, not even in despotic countries, is the executive Government more energetic through the prompt obedience and concurrence of the citizens; nowhere else, not even in Switzerland or the United States, do the citizens exercise their right to criticize and to thwart the Government with a more loyal submission of the ruling powers; nowhere is there less desire of violent revolution than there has been for two centuries together in Protestant Great Britain (for the ejecting of one Catholic king does not here concern our argument); nowhere is there a country which, in proportion to its millions, is fuller of all the elements, mental and material, which kings desire and patriots extol. In Canada, where the two religions come into equal competition, the superior energy of Protestantism in everything that constitutes the grandeur of nations is manifest. Now it is a familiar fact, that such worldly superiority does in itself tend to the progress (at least to the superficial extension) of the religion in which it is found. It cannot be said that Catholics, like Turks, are so fanatically wedded to their creed as to be proof against all refutations; for it is notorious that in Catholic Spain, France, Germany, a disbelief in the national religion is very widely spread through the higher and middle ranks—a disbelief which sometimes pervades the ruling powers themselves. Yet, though they may cast off the Romish faith, they seldom or never adopt that of Protestants.

Probably all men who are thoughtful enough to abandon the Catholic Church, are also well informed enough to be aware what are the true causes of the energy, wealth, and intelligence of the Protestant nations; that it does not arise from the positive creed which they still hold, but from the private liberty which accompanies this creed or from the energetic public administration which this liberty enforces and maintains. In fact France, though nominally Catholic, vies to a great degree with England in all national developments; and the causes are evidently either purely political, or inhere, not in religious faith, but much rather in religious scepticism. Out of that unbelief, which by the great French revolution of the last century broke down the power of the Church, has arisen much of the vigour of modern France; no part of it can be reasonably ascribed to the positive creed. Evidently then it is to the negative side of Protestantism that Protestant nations owe their energy and freedom, so far as the cause is ecclesiastical at all. It will further be observed that Russia, having a creed which from a Protestant point of view is in its essence neither better nor worse than Romanism, and being without the individual freedom which is to us so precious, nevertheless is on the whole flourishing within and powerful without, because of the energy of its central executive; an energy which is upheld by summary proceedings of the Royal House from within to secure an able occupant of the throne. In short, on the very surface of history is a broad fact, which is perpetually overlooked by the panegyrists of ecclesiastical Protestantism—namely, that while all Europe was still Catholic, every State was prosperous in a near proportion to its freedom, and the freest displayed exactly those points of superiority of which England or Prussia may now boast. Look to the Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella—a nation profoundly Catholic; in fact, more Catholic then than now—for unbelief had not as yet pervaded its higher ranks, as in later days. The Parliaments of Arragon, of Castile, of Valencia were more spirited than those of England at the same time. The municipalities were as well ordered and as independent; the local authorities as active and as responsible to the local community; the public law as efficiently sustained; the industry was as intelligent, as persevering, and as highly rewarded by wealth: or rather, in all these matters Spain then took the lead of England. Her poetry and other literature was in advance of ours; she had a celebrated school of painting, while we were strange to such art. By the patriotism, high spirit, intelligence, faithfulness, and mutual trust of Spaniards, Spain then stood at the head of all Europe, and lent to her subsequent monarchs—Charles of Ghent, and his son Philip II.—an enormous power which their despotism first lessened and soon undermined. Spain has undergone no change of religion. Evidently then, it is not Catholicism which in itself has been her bane; but the despotism which, to sustain the Catholicism, has crushed her intelligence and forbidden her activity. Nearly the same remarks may be made on Bohemia. Turning to another country, Belgium, we see a people which—although not without violence from its princes preserved to Catholicism in the struggle of the Reformation — has yet on the whole retained its local freedom with singular success under Catholic and despotic houses; and since 1830 has become a wholly independent State, with a free Royal Constitution. Thus, to speak roughly, we may say that Belgium has never lost either her freedom or her Catholicism. And she has all along been a highly industrious, energetic, prospering country—not indeed intellectually prominent, for this has been prohibited by the ascendant ecclesiasticism—yet her general state suffices to prove that the material well-being of England does not spring from that Protestantism in which she differs from Belgium, but from that freedom which she has in common with Belgium. Thus we cannot claim that Catholics will impute any of these exterior advantages, of which we boast, to our remaining ecclesiasticism, or regard them as an honour to the positive side of our national creed.

Nay, nor can be impute to this cause any part of our mental superiority to Belgium or to Sicily; and for this plain reason, that on the one side the ecclesiastical organs have done their worst to crush our intellectual vigour; and on the other our Ecclesiastical school has done its worst to scold it down. For every stupid and mischievous error a hard fight has been maintained by theologians, in proportion to their "orthodoxy." Take, for instance, the superstition concerning witches and the possession by devils. The truth of the latter is still guaranteed in the Canons of the Church of England, which regulate the casting out of devils by license of the bishop. The reality of witchcraft was publicly maintained on Scriptural evidence alike by clergymen and by judges. Chief Baron Hale (a very religious man) not only argued for it Scripturally from the judgment-seat in 1665, but had two women hanged for witches. Education and free thought prevailed, against the positive evidence of the Bible; in favour of which the celebrated John Wesley still struggled.

> "It is true," says he, "that the English in general, and indeed most of the men of learning in Europe, have given up all accounts of witches and apparitions as mere old wives' fables. I am sorry for it. . . . The giving up of witchcraft is in effect giving up the Bible. . . . I cannot give up to all the Deists in Great Britain the existence of witchcraft, till I give up the credit of all history, sacred and profane."

His contemporary, the celebrated Dr. Johnson, a High Churchman and anxiously orthodox, was a believer in the "Cock-lane ghost" of those days. Certainly no one can think that the theory of "the Bible and the Bible only," &c., has led Protestants to resign the Witch of Endor.—Again, if there is any one national enormity which more than all others tends to repress mental energy, it is religious persecution. Of this there has been far less among the Protestant countries—to their undoubted benefit; and yet, certainly, we have not to thank Protestant theology for it. The practice of Calvin was substantially the theory of all the orthodox reformed Churches. If the hierarchy or Presbyterians of England and Scotland could have had their will, mental freedom would have been crippled in Great Britain as effectually as in France or even in Spain. The Independents won, by the sword of Cromwell, with political also a religious freedom before unheard of in these lands; yet for heretics who went beyond them, it was long before the law provided safety, much less gave them their natural equality. In every step of progress towards freedom, it is lamentable to say that English "orthodoxy" has always been found on the side of resistance. Not only were the Test and Corporation Acts sustained by the Church influence, and were abolished in 1828 by a lay Parliament, whose Protestantism had but few positive elements of the Reformed Theology; but even much later, when the Dissenters' Chapel Act was passed—an Act which, in its practical aim, did but hinder the Unitarian revenues, chapels, and burying-grounds from being taken from the hereditary possessors (often children or grandchildren of the donors), and given up to be scrambled for by strangers, with a certainty that the whole must be swallowed up in lawyers' fees;—in that crisis, when Peel and Lyndhurst, and even Gladstone, stood up for the Unitarians, all the "orthodoxy" of England stirred itself to resist this act of equity. It is to our laity, and to that part especially which has little ostensible religious character, that every successive victory over bigoted intolerance is due. Hence it is to the negative, not to the positive side of Protestantism, that we must ascribe our mental energy and intelligence.

Undoubtedly, these negative elements have been of vast national moment, by liberating the energies of individuals; whereby knowledge has risen into science, industry into systematic art, wealth and skill have increased, labour has organized itself, and an unusually large part of the nation has employed itself on fruitful thought and invention. But in all this there has been little or nothing of properly religious influence. The more Protestantism has been developed into its own characteristic prosperity, the more Atheistic is the aspect of public affairs. It has not known at all better than its Romish rival how to combine religious earnestness with tolerant justice, and has become just only by passing into indifference to religion. Its divines often attack Romanism by insisting on the vast spread of unbelief within the pale of that Church; while they are astonishingly blind to the very same phenomenon within all the national Protestant Churches. This is not a recent fact, as some imagine. Indeed, since the Restoration, it is difficult to name the time at which it may reasonably be thought that the existing English statesmen had any grave and practical belief in the national religion. Montesquieu, who passed for a free thinker in France, found that in England (near a century and a half ago) he had far too much religion for our great-grandfathers. Equally in the Lutheran Churches of Germany and Sweden, also in the Calvinistic Churches of Switzerland and elsewhere, the same face of events has presented itself: the clergy tend either to lose all spiritual character, or to take refuge in Unitarianism; the laity, in proportion to their cultivation, have been prone to entire unbelief.

Under that measure of mental freedom which the great rebellion against Charles I. brought in, and by aid of the growing indifference to religion in France and elsewhere, physical science has in the last two centuries grown up. From this, more than from anything else, has proceeded the political superiority of Europe to the Turks, the Persians, the Chinese. It has given to us safe oceanic navigation—a vast command of the useful metals and all material of war—the steam engine and all its developments—with a miscellany ever increasing of practical applications of chemistry. Indeed, the relative strength of different nations, which is ill measured by any religious test, such as Catholicism or Protestantism, and is not accurately measured even by a political test, such as freedom or despotism, yet (numbers being equal) is well measured by the development of physical science. Russia is stronger than China, though having but a quarter of the population; yet the form of government in China is as despotic, the people is as obedient, and far more conveniently situated, on the noblest rivers, in highly advantageous concentration, with a better soil and climate, and a splendid oceanic coast. Russia has but one advantage, and that one thing is all-important: she has introduced the physical sciences of the West, and has turned to imperial service the skill of our ablest minds. Two centuries ago, before physical science had effected anything practical, the Protestant States had no perceptible superiority over the Catholic; now, they have on the whole a superiority, but it is proportioned chiefly to the development and application of science. Perhaps then in truth it is more to the science of matter than to Protestant theology, that we ought to attribute whatever advantages we can boast in material strength.

Meanwhile, no one can overlook the portentous fact, that this physical science—to which we owe so much of what some would claim for the credit of Protestantism—is intensely repugnant and destructive to the theology of the Reformation, and constantly drives to results not only anti-Christian, but even Atheistic. Dr. Pusey and Mr. Sewell are forward to aver this. Mr. Sewell declares his aversion to the glaring light of science, and well understands its antagonism to the belief in miracles. It is not that many scientific men will go to the full length of asserting that no *imaginable* evidence could be strong enough to prove a miracle; yet, certainly, that no *such* evidence as is pretended by divines can ever prove *such* miracles as they allege. Science teaches us to study every question *à priori*, with a view to judge how much *à posteriori* evidence will suffice for its decision. If a statement is beforehand highly probable, we need but moderate and ordinary testimony to create belief in it; if it be decidedly improbable, we want first-rate and clear testimony; if it be intensely improbable, we need testimony direct, conclusive, and unimpeachable. Let us pass from this principle to the two great miracles which lie at the foundation of orthodox Christianity; we mean, of course, the miraculous conception and the resurrection of Jesus; and let us calmly consider how they would be treated if they were now for the first time heard of, and brought to the test of ordinary scientific evidence.

It is not our fault, if the discussion of the former topic somewhat shock religious decorum. In heathenism indecent fables are not uncommon; to have to refute such things is disagreeable. If the refutation prove disagreeable to the votary also, all unprejudiced bystanders will say that he must blame those who invented the creed, not him who refutes it; and surely the same topic applies here. We are ordered to believe that a certain person was born without a human father; and when we ask, on what proof, we have handed to us, in the first instance, the book called Matthew, in which it is alleged that Joseph, the ostensible father of Jesus, discovered his betrothed wife to have premature signs of maternity; that he was disposed to repudiate her privately, in order to save her shame; when, lo! he had a *dream;* a DREAM! informing him that there was no shame in the matter, but great glory; it was a holy miracle; the father of her child was no human being, but was the Spirit of God. Such is the account in Matthew.

We should fear to insult an English magistrate, by expecting him to believe a similar story concerning some English peasant girl, on the ground that her betrothed lover had had a *dream* to that effect, which tranquillized his mind after a painful struggle. Not only no English magistrate, no judge, no jury, would believe such a tale on such evidence; but no clergyman would believe it, no bishop, no archbishop: this we may assert with absolute freedom and certainty, however large demands of easy faith they make on others. The least that even an archbishop could require would be some security,—or say, some plausible pretence for believing—that it was not a common dream, but a properly miraculous vision; and that the man to whom it was vouchsafed should display some superiority of mind, which might, if not justify our trust in his power to discriminate between dreams and visions, yet palliate our credulity in so trusting him. Who then was Joseph? Why should we believe him so easily?

Who indeed was Joseph? We know nothing of him except that this story was told of him at a later time. Nay, we cannot even attain any moderately good proof that he ever had such a dream, or professed to have had it: for it is on the face of the narrative that he passed as the father of Jesus, and that there was no public suspicion that that was an error, some thirty years later, at which time Joseph has vanished out of the narrative and is supposed to have been dead. We have then a second question: *Who* is it that tells us that Joseph ever narrated such a dream, ever professed painful suspicions, and received such a solution of them? The reply is: We know little or nothing about him. It is usual now to call him Matthew; and if Matthew was really the writer's name, if he even wrote within fifty years after the dream, it helps very little to prove that Joseph was his informant, or had ever heard the tale.

It has been observed (and the remark seems decisive) that no young woman of ordinary good sense or right feeling could have failed to reveal everything of this critical nature to her betrothed from the first moment. That she should allow him to have unjust and dishonouring suspicions, and remain silent, is quite unnatural: it is conduct of which no plausible explanation can be given. And now, we are expected to believe a mighty and cardinal miracle on evidence which would not suffice in the laxest court of law to establish an ordinary fact.

If the possession of an estate depended on priority of existence, and the evidence offered were, that a man called Matthew, who died last year, had left a MS. which stated that a certain Joseph had a dream, and that in this dream an angel of the Lord told him that "James was born before Joses;" we say, no ecclesiastical tribunal in Europe would believe this very credible statement on such evidence.

There are many persons so thoughtless, or so unreasonable, as to assume that religious credulity is *safer* and more *pious* than incredulity. As if for the instruction of such, the Romanist steps in, to show them by his example to what results their easy faith leads. For centuries together Spain was eminent in the Romish world for its devotion to the Virgin, to whom the Spaniards have ascribed a prerogative which they entitle "immaculate conception."

Protestants in general, misled by the phrase, suppose it to assert the same miracle concerning the birth of Mary (whose mother is ecclesiastically known as St. Ann), as Matthew and Luke assert concerning the birth of Jesus. The writer of these lines has been rebuked by two Catholics for this very error; and as they were very explicit, he supposes they were correct. They explained, that the miracle in the case of St. Ann was, *not* that the Holy Spirit acted on her womb to *supersede* a human father, but so *combined* his influence on that organ with that of the real father, as to hinder the introduction of "original sin" by the father's act! Within the last few years we have seen this doctrine raised into a dogma of the church by the Pope; and Protestants cry out, that the dogma is very disgusting, and that it has no basis of proof; for of St. Ann nobody knows anything. We cannot defend the doctrine from such attacks; but we doubt whether the "orthodox" Protestant has fairly earned a right to make them. His own dogma is equally baseless, not less puerile or more edifying. If he insists that it is pious to believe rumours or speculations of this nature, in which the gossip of all heathenism abounds, he does his best to throw open the floodgates of measureless credulity and indecent fable.

A curious story, not much known, is alluded to by Dr. Campbell, of Aberdeen, in the fourteenth of his celebrated "Lectures on Ecclesiastical History." So late as the pontificate of Clement XI., in the beginning of the last century, a preacher in Rome, intending to honour St. Ann, applied to her the title "Grandmother of God;" which, being new, appeared highly offensive, and was suppressed by the Pope; who doubtless foresaw that, if it were permitted, we should next hear of "God's grandfather, uncle, aunt, and cousins." "The second Council of Nice, in quoting the Epistle of James, do not hesitate (says Dr. C.) to style the writer God's brother (*ἀδελφόθεον*)." "The sole spring of offence is in the first step," viz., the calling the Virgin Mary "Mother of God." For, he adds, to distinguish between "the mother of the mother," and "the grandmother," is impossible. As a Protestant, he of course disapproves of the received Romish phraseology; yet, clear as he generally is, he leaves us in doubt whether he disapproves of saying (p. 253) that the Virgin is "the mother of him who is God," equally with the other formula, that she is "the mother of God." He has just informed us that under Pope Hormisdas and some of his successors there was a fierce strife,* whether we ought to say, "*One* of the Trinity suffered in the flesh," or "*One person* of the Trinity suffered in the flesh." Unless such controversies are to be regarded as rightful and necessary, what are they but a *reductio ad absurdum* of Anglican orthodoxy?

We pass to the second great miracle, the Resurrection, to which the Ascension is a sort of complement. Here it is possible that men of science will admit (though we have no right to make concessions in their name), that evidence is *imaginable* adequate to prove facts of such a nature—which are not negative (as in the case of miraculous conception), but positive. Suppose a man's head were cut off, or his body burned to ashes; after either of these events, duly testified, no man of science could be incredulous of the real death. Again, suppose that after such death testimony were offered that the same person was still alive. Inasmuch as only from information and experience do we hitherto disbelieve that a man once dead ever resumes animal life in the same form, it would seem that an amount of first-rate testimony is *imaginable*, which might force us to modify the universality of this doctrine: nevertheless, the evidence needs to be very cogent. We must have decisive proof of the death, and decisive proof of the renewed animal life: a failure on either side would make the whole vain. If, for instance, a person fainted and seemed to die from exhaustion or loss of blood, and, after this, came overwhelming evidence that he was still alive; it would not have the slightest tendency to prove that he was risen from the dead, but only that the death had not been real. Now the very peculiar phenomenon in the Biblical narrative of the Resurrection is, that of the two propositions, both of which are equally essential, it is hard to say which of the two is less satisfactorily sustained: so that those who find it every way impossible to believe the miracle, are at the same time left uncertain whether or not the alleged death was real. Crucifixion was notoriously the most tedious of deaths, and was for this very reason selected by the Carthaginians and Romans as a mode of long torment and ignominy. The loss of blood endured by it is so trifling, that the victim dies only by exhaustion and thirst, or by the sufferings of muscular spasm. From the article "Cross," in the "Penny Cyclopædia," we extract the following:—

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* "There were four different opinions. One set approved of both expressions; a second condemned both; a third maintained the former expression to be orthodox, the latter heterodox; and a fourth affirmed the reverse. In this squabble, emperors, popes, and patriarchs engaged with great fury."—Dr. Campbell.

> "As death (from crucifixion) in many cases did not ensue for a length of time, guards were placed to prevent the relatives or friends of the crucified from giving them any relief, or taking them away whilst alive, *or removing their bodies after they were dead*. . . . . . . Even when it (crucifixion) took place by nailing, neither the wounds themselves nor the quantity of blood lost would be sufficient in all cases to bring on speedy death. During the reign of Louis XV. several women (religious enthusiasts, called Convulsionaires) voluntarily underwent crucifixion. Dr. Merand . . . . . relates that he was present at the crucifixion of two females, named Sister Rachel and Sister Felicité. They were laid down, fixed by nails five inches long driven firmly through both hands and feet into the wood of which the crosses were made. The crosses were then raised to a vertical position. In this manner they remained nailed, while other ceremonies of these fanatics proceeded. Sister Rachel, who had been first crucified, was then taken down; she lost very little blood. Sister Felicité was afterwards taken from her cross. Three small basins, called *palettes*, full of blood, flowed from her hands and feet. Their wounds were then dressed, and the meeting was terminated. *Sister Felicite declared that it was the twenty-first time she had undergone crucifixion.*"

The death being ordinarily so slow, it is of great importance to know *how long* Jesus hung on the cross: and here the narrators are at variance. Mark says distinctly (xv. 25—34) that Jesus was crucified at the *third* hour, and died at the *ninth* hour. John as distinctly tells us that he was not yet crucified at the *sixth** hour (xix. 14). "It was *about the sixth hour*, and Pilate saith unto the Jews, Behold your King. And they cried out, Away with him, crucify him. . . Then delivered he him unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away. *And he bearing his cross, went forth into a place called*" . . . . &c. &c. Such, after Pilate's command, was the further process of carrying the cross out from Pilate's judgment-seat to Golgotha; which for anything that appears to the contrary, may have delayed the actual crucifixion for another hour. In short, accepting the narratives, there is nothing in them to show that Jesus was longer than *two** hours actually on the cross. It is further manifest in them all, that Pilate most unwillingly consented to his execution, and was driven to it only by fear. He distinctly declares him to be innocent, and tries to save him. In Matthew he takes water, and symbolically washes his hands in sight of the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it." A governor, who, after so humiliating a struggle, yields an innocent man to public death, is not unlikely to compromise with his conscience by giving secret orders to the executioners *not* to kill him, but to put him on to the cross for a short time, and give up his body, as if dead, to his friends, as soon as he appeared to faint. What might thus seem beforehand probable, is unexpectedly confirmed by John's information (xx. 32, 33) that the soldiers, knowing that the time was insufficient to kill, broke the legs of the other two who were crucified with Jesus (not a very effectual way of hastening death,† but at least a security against their resuming the trade of robbers); while they did *not* break the legs of Jesus. John adds, that they refrained *because* they saw him to be dead; which appears to be a mere surmise; the real reason may have been that they had secret orders from Pilate to spare Jesus. Curiously enough, John proceeds unawares to state what distinctly suggests, that Jesus was not dead when they began to take him down from the cross; for he adds, that a soldier "pierced his side with a spear, and forthwith came out blood and water: and he that saw it (whoever this was) bare record, and his record is true," &c. Some of the Fathers, as Strauss observes, strongly felt how opposed this is to common experience of death. Says

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* To save the Biblical infallibility, some divines hold that John *had a different way of counting the hours* from the other Evangelists. The learned Bloomfield, in his "Commentary to the Greek Testament," thinks such a theory too rash. He says (on Mark xv. 25), "Although such discrepancies [as this between Mark and John] are (as Fritz observes) 'rather to be patiently borne, than removed by rash measures,' yet here we are, I conceive, not reduced to any great necessity. For although the mode of reconciling the two accounts by a sort of *management* [Italics in Dr. B.], however it may be approved by many commentators, is not to be commended, yet . . . " in short, it is best to believe the text in John corrupt, and to alter *sixth* to *third.* Of course this is possible; but so is the opposite; and no one can rest a miracle on a voluntary correction of a text.

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* Strauss has discussed this whole subject carefully: "Life of Jesus," Part III. ch. iv. § 134. [First Work, 1st edition.] He thinks the additions in John to be mythical inventions: but we here decline to discuss such possibilities, and (concessively) abide by the statements as given us.

† Strauss observes that the breaking of legs nowhere else occurs in connexion with crucifixion among the Romans. He thinks that the fractures would be sure to mortify, and thus cause death.

Origen: "In all other dead bodies the blood coagulates, and no pure water flows from them; but the marvel of the dead body in the case of Jesus is, blood and water poured from his side even after death." So Euthymius: "For out of a dead human being, though you should stab him ten thousand times, no blood will come. This phenomenon is supernatural, and clearly proves that he who was stabbed was higher than man." We are too aware of the delicacy of such physiological questions, to speak so confidently ourselves. It suffices to say, that the flow of blood is most easily and naturally accounted for by supposing the circulation still to be active. Indeed, even swooning makes it hard to get blood out of a man. If he falls in battle from a sabre-cut and faints, the heart ceasing its normal action, the blood flows too feebly in the arteries to issue from the wound, which presently coagulates; and when death is complete, the stagnation must ordinarily be still greater. It is of course *possible*, that though crucifixion had not caused death, this spear-wound proved fatal; but the alternative is equally *possible*—that as he was still alive, neither did this new wound kill him. The narrative decides nothing either way. We however do learn from it that Pilate desired to save him, gave him up with a bad conscience, and subjected him to the shortest time of crucifixion which would obviate quarrel with the Jewish rulers; that Pilate's executioners favoured Jesus in comparison with the two robbers by not breaking his legs; allowed a humane person, when Jesus complained of the thirst accompanying that miserable torment, to moisten his lips with vinegar, which, diluted with water, was a well-known beverage of the Roman soldiers, and is a great relief to a fevered mouth; further, Pilate's officers took him down from the cross, and prepared to deliver him to his friends, while there were symptoms which strongly indicate life, and after an interval so short, that (as Mark asserts) Pilate "marvelled if he were already dead." With so very imperfect a proof of death, it is manifest that all pains in the second part of the story to prove a Resurrection are wasted: the more so, since, according to the accounts, neither was he buried in such a way as could have tended to suffocation. His body was given over to the friendly hand of Joseph of Arimathæa, who laid him "in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock;" that is to say, in a rocky vault, where a wounded man might receive surgical treatment and cordials.

The evidence offered in proof that Jesus after his burial was seen alive, has been many times ably discussed. English readers who desire to see what can be said against it, may consult Charles Hennell's "Inquiry on the Origin of Christianity," Strauss' "Life of Jesus," or W. R. Greg's "Creed of Christendom." From the last-named we extract the following, p. 216 :—

> "A marked and most significant peculiarity in these accounts, which has not received the attention* it deserves, is, that scarcely any of those who are said to have seen Jesus after his resurrection *recognised him*, though long and intimately acquainted with his person. . . . (Mark xvi. 12.) 'After that he appeared *in another form* to two of them.' Now if it really were Jesus who appeared to these various parties, would this want of recognition have been possible? If it was Jesus, he was so changed that his most intimate friends did not know him. How then can *we* know that it was himself?"

The defence put in by our divines does nothing but show the shifting and untangible nature of their argument. They say, that the risen Jesus had a glorified body which could pass through shut doors, and of course was sufficiently different from his former body to embarrass recognition. We began by avowing that human testimony was *imaginable* that might prove the restoration of a dead man to life. But we must modify the avowal, by adding, that no common testimony could ever prove the sort of resurrection here tendered to us: for if the risen body is not a body of flesh and blood, but "glorified" and ethereal, and so unlike the former body of Jesus that his friends identify him only by the symbolical action of breaking bread, as the two disciples at Emmaus (Luke xxiv.), their *testimony* is unavailing. To what do they affect to bear witness? They do not lay before us the impressions on their sight or hearing, but merely the inferences of their mind, that the person who broke bread in a certain way *must have been* Jesus, *though he looked very unlike him.* And this leads naturally to the important point, which Mr. Hennell has so well made prominent:—

> "It seems probable (says he, p. 204, second edition) that the original belief among the Apostles was merely that Christ had been raised from the dead *in an invisible or spiritual manner*: for where we can arrive at Peter's own words, viz., in his 'Epistle,' he speaks of Christ as being put to death *in the flesh*, but made alive *in the spirit* (1 Pet. iii. 18)—*θανατωθεὶς μεν σαρκί ζωοποιηθεὶς δε πνεύματι.* That the last phrase signifies a mode of operation invisible to human eyes, appears from the following clause, which describes Jesus as preaching, also in the spirit (ἐν ῶ), to the spirits in prison. But some of the disciples soon added to this idea of an invisible or spiritual resurrection, that Jesus had appeared to many in a bodily form. . . . ."

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* Hennell touches the topic in a short but decisive paragraph, p. 239, second edition.

Men who have seen and heard another man, have a certain power of identifying him when they see him and hear him again; and when by eye or ear they do identify him, we call their declaration concerning it *testimony* or *witness*, and assign a certain weight to it. But if they declare that they do *not* identify him by eye or hear, but only by the inferences of their mind, it is an abuse of language to call this testimony. If the glorified spirit of a deceased friend were to appear to one of us—whether in ecstatic vision or in what seemed to be our waking senses—we could not claim that other men should accept as "testimony" our statement that it was he: for though they have experience of the trustworthiness of sense to recognize and identify ordinary bodies in their ordinary states, they know nothing of the trustworthiness of sense when it pretends to identify a form now ethereal and glorified with what was once a human body. And as it is not only in Peter's epistle and in Paul's vision (as, indeed, in Paul's *doctrine* of the "resurrection-body"), that this idea of a merely spiritual resurrection of Jesus is suggested, but the same occurs in all the Gospels—partly in the difficulty of recognizing Jesus, partly in his vanishing out of their sight or suddenly coming through walls and doors—the whole is removed beyond the sphere of testimony, even if the declarations were consistent and distinct, and were laid before us on the authority of the original eye-witnesses.

Thus those two cardinal events which Protestantism undertakes to *prove* and recognizes as its basis,—when their alleged Scriptural evidence is examined fail of satisfying the demands of ordinary scientific reasoning; after which we need not wonder that Protestantism cannot win intelligent converts. For it does not, like Catholicism, tell people that they must not reason *at all* concerning religion. On the contrary, it excites their reasoning powers—bids them to examine—professes to give proofs—lays before them the Scripture as decisive—talks high of private judgment—and yet gives no evidence which can bear the tests of ordinary historical and scientific inquiry. When hereto it adds unseemly *threats*, denouncing Divine judgment on all whose intellect rises against its imbecility, none can wonder that the freer-thinking Catholics say they may as well remain under the old Church as go into another which, while it affects to appeal to reason, is as essentially unreasonable as the old one. "My child," said a Catholic bishop to a Protestant in his neighbourhood, "did I rightly hear that you called the sacred doctrine of

Transubstantiation irrational? Oh, folly! If, in order to receive the doctrine of the Trinity, you have crucified vain reason, what avails to build again that which you have destroyed. by setting reason to carp at another doctrine which is too hard for it?"

Besides the miracles which inhere in the person of Jesus, there are two great classes of miracles wrought by him, and by or in his disciples, which may deserve a few words here. First we have the casting-out of devils—a miracle very prevalent in the three first Gospels, though unknown to the fourth. No educated physician, Catholic or Protestant, can well listen with gravity to a truly orthodox discourse on this subject. Indeed, many well-informed divines are ashamed of it, and declare that popular ignorance *mistook* epilepsy, catalepsy, madness, and other diseases, for a possession by evil spirits. They are aware that the superstition was learned by the Jews in Babylon, and still exists in very ignorant countries; and they tell us that the Evangelists *accommodated their dialect* to that of the ignorant, but made no substantial error. Hence, according to them, as we accept the phrase, that "the sun rises," even if astronomically questionable; so must we tacitly interpret the "possession by a devil" into epilepsy, or some other disease. But such divines are rather well-informed than candid; for they cannot but be aware that it is *impossible* to get rid of the "devils" by interpretation. Divines more candid, but sometimes worse-informed, have far more cogently argued, that the discerning of Jesus, as Son of God, which is attributed to demoniacs—and still more decisively, the passing of a legion of devils from a man into a herd of swine—demonstrate the narrators to have had a definite belief in the supernatural knowledge, power, and personality of the "devils" who dwelt in the demoniacs.

The second class of miracles is the speaking with tongues, which so abounds in the book of the "Acts of the Apostles," and on which there is ample discussion in "Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians." We should in vain try here to abridge Mr. Greg's able summary of the phenomenon, in pp. 169—178 of the "Creed of Christendom." It is clear, both from the details given by Paul, and from many other considerations, that these "tongues" were not real foreign languages, but were *gibberish*, such as used to be heard in the late Mr. Edward Irving's congregation—a gibberish which Paul felt to be "most probably nonsensical, unworthy, and grotesque" (Greg)—which he desired to repress, yet did not dare to forbid.

> "We are driven to the painful but unavoidable conclusion, that those mysterious and unintelligible utterances, which the Apostles and the early Christians looked upon as the effects of the Holy Spirit, the manifestation of its presence, the signs of its operation, the especial indication and criterion of its having fallen upon any one, were in fact simply the physiologically natural results of morbid and perilous cerebral exaltation, induced by strong religious excitement acting on uncultivated and susceptible minds; results which in all ages and nations have followed in similar circumstances and from similar stimuli; and that these signs to which Peter appealed, and to which the other brethren succumbed, as proving that God intended the Gospel to be preached to Gentiles as well as to Jews, showed only that Gentiles were susceptible to the same excitements, and manifested that susceptibility in the same manner as the Jews."—*Greg*, p. 178.

There are other doctrines, common to the creed of all the national Churches, which, though too cardinal to omit, are too vast to discuss here in detail. We allude especially to the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Atonement. These are rejected from Christianity by the followers of Dr. Priestley, who can fight powerfully against "Orthodoxy," when they go the full length of avowing that the Epistles of Paul were of no authority in the Church at large for two centuries, and that the fourth Gospel is full of profanities, which would have shocked the earliest Christians. But nothing can be so opposed to the creed of European Christendom as this avowal; and without disrespect to some great Unitarian writers, when we speak of Christianity or Protestantism, we do not and cannot mean *their* scheme of thought and religion. The accomplished and variously-gifted scholars who hold places as bishops or deans among us, will justify us in treating these difficult doctrines, with the resurrection and the miraculous conception, as essential to Protestant Christianity. But since they are aware that the laws of evidence are coeval with the human mind, and that the evidence strictly and rightfully needed to establish a marvel *now* was always strictly and rightfully needed, even before men's minds had ripened to discern it; we may fairly propose to one of these learned persons, in the calm retirement of his library, to put down on paper the kind of evidence which, if tendered, would satisfy his mind that the holiest and noblest man now living is the Eternal (or *an* Eternal) Divine Being, Creator of this world and of all worlds, future Judge of mankind, who will give eternal life to some, and award condemnation to others—a Being towards whom we may exercise absolute trust and hope, and supreme adoration. If he seriously undertake the task we suggest, we should not be greatly surprised if his meditation threw unexpected light on Edward Irving's apophthegm, "Intellectual evidence is the egg of infidelity;" or if it even reconciled him to the distinguished Mr. Keble's advice to his friend Arnold, as homely good sense, to "put down" his doubts concerning the Trinity "by main force," and take a curacy to get rid of them.

At the same time, nearly the same problem as the above rests on Unitarian Christians, whether their philosophy grovel or aspire; who after giving active aid to demolish the gorgeous fabric of magical ecclesiasm, now struggle to sustain its central shining minaret—the unapproachable, absolute moral perfection of him, whom they elaborately maintain to be merely human, and limited by human conditions. But we will vary our demand. Suppose the East and West so far to change places, that missionaries of Buddhism come to England to convert us to their religion. Let them proclaim that Sakya Muni called Buddha—whom, by reason of his virtue, his followers unwisely have worshipped as God—was truly divine in goodness, the incarnate image of absolute divine purity; that, as such, *his Person enters into the substance and obligations of human religion;* on which account they call upon us to listen, while they preach his life, person, and pre-eminence; and, moreover, thoughtfully to study the ancient books which record his sanctity. This hypothesis is, in fact, so closely akin to the real Buddhism, that it might on any day become a case of reality. Now, we ask of Unitarian Christians on what *primâ facie* evidence should we be bound to explore the Oriental books, and listen with religious hope to the argument, that Buddha is the Head of mankind, and unique type of perfection? To reply that we have found in Jesus, called Messiah, such a Head already, and do not want another, may be practically good, but is scientifically weak; for it avails equally to *them*, and would justify them in exploding the perfect Christ, because they already believe in a perfect Buddha. Is the intrinsic unplausibility of a doctrine never a reason for exploding it, without sacrifice of valuable time and research?—or can any fancy concerning an Apollo, who is physically a God and morally a libertine, be more unplausible than the Unitarian notion, that Jesus was mentally a dwarf and morally the unique manifestation of God?

The present condition of theological "philosophy" among us (if the phrase be allowable) indicates that the old school is dying out. From fifty to thirty years ago the doctrines of Paley (as regards Christian "Evidences") were dominant in both Universities, and were acknowledged by High and Low Church alike. At Oxford they were especially upheld by such men as Copleston, afterwards Bishop of Llandaff; Shuttleworth, afterwards Bishop of Chichester; Whately, afterwards Archbishop of Dublin; Lloyd, Regius Professor of Divinity, and a little while Bishop of Oxford; Vowler Short, now Bishop of St. Asaph; Longley, now Archbishop of Canterbury; besides others who never emerged from the University. They were able men, some remarkably able; they had the field to themselves, yet they could not keep it. They sincerely believed that by invoking "historical testimony" they could recommend to the assent of every unprejudiced and intelligent mind such doctrines as we have denoted; yet, against their learning, experience, and high authority, two young men in Oxford commenced an unexpected reaction—Pusey, Professor of Hebrew, and J. H. Newman, whose sole distinction then consisted in being a Fellow of a most distinguished College; both of whom had evidently become aware that Protestantism could not possibly stand on its old basis. To prove by historical and learned evidence *the postulate of the Evangelicals*, that the Bible from end to end is infallible, they saw to be at once a hopeless and an absurd undertaking. To lay logic as the foundation, and make the doctrine of the Trinity the superstructure, they more than hinted, was very dangerous; indeed, some of the "Tracts for the Times" almost avow that no Protestant can prove the doctrine even from the Scripture. Dr. Newman (led on, we suppose, by polemical instincts) struck upon the method of assailing with logic all who appeal to reason (that is, common Protestants and liberals), while assuming that the true faith (his own), being founded on something higher than reason, is not bound to justify itself to reason. This gave to his school a delightful licence of attacking other people's want of logic, while reserving to itself the privilege of being illogical at pleasure. Oxford still boasted of able men, though some of those whom we have named were withdrawn. The new "Puseyism" soon reached the ears of the outer world, and interested all England. Baden Powell—and shall we say Hampden?—opposed it from within; Whately, and Arnold, and Julius Hare, and a host of Evangelicals, from without. At Cambridge, at least one man of vast and various powers, keen ambition, deep and original thought—Whewell, Master of Trinity College—would have started a rival philosophy of the Christian religion, if he had been able. In morals, Sedgwick and Whewell have repudiated Paley; but we have never understood that in regard to "Christian Evidences" they undertake to supersede him. Like the deep-souled Julius Hare, and the sprightly, eager Arnold, they proved unable to check the movement of Newman and Pusey, whose attacks on the vulgar Protestantism were very unshrinking. The Tractarians were, no doubt, in a false position. They overthrew their allies from within, and were debarred from attacking their great enemy without; for Romanism, precisely on their ground, claims exemption from the task of reconciling its dogmas with reason: moreover, their doctrine of "Apostolic succession" *presumes* that a Roman bishop, however wicked, has a power of bestowing the Holy Spirit. In the result, Dr. Newman discovered and repented of the sin of assailing Rome. He has, nevertheless, done an effectual work in England, practically showing to what those tend who assume "High Church" axioms, and reason from them with consistent logic. Simultaneously, our knowledge of German theology has continually been on the advance. Dr. Pusey indeed himself, in his ardent youth, was the first person to expound at Oxford the deep Biblical learning and warm piety of German Protestants, who had in some points unhappily been carried too far, but who ought nevertheless to be esteemed and honoured, and wisely used. But he appears in a very few years to have discerned that the free study of the Bible in the nineteenth century would never end in the theology of the sixteenth, and by the discovery to have been forced into a totally new career. Meanwhile, it has become notorious that the arguments of Lardner and Paley break down on the literary and historical side, in the presence of the more accurate scholarship of the Germans, to say nothing of a higher philosophy; so that our academicians, if they endeavour to discuss "evidences" in Protestant fashion, dread to be precipitated into German "Neology;" while, if they deprecate private judgment and appeal to the Church, they are fighting the battle of Rome. In such an entanglement men of backward and stagnant minds may write and speak as if nothing new had been added to our knowledge of antiquity in the last fifty years; but leading talents will no longer give their energies to develop and maintain either theory of Anglicanism—of the Low, or of the High Church.

The school of Paley has now, for perhaps the last twenty years, its most prominent representative in Mr. Henry Rogers, whose grave Edinburgh articles have been succeeded by elaborate effusions, called *coarseness* and *ribaldry* by some critics, *sacred* *mirth* by others. Most of our readers have probably read his conception of an Irish Adam talking brogue to the Creator against the Ten Commandments; and will add epithets at their own discretion to Mr. Rogers's name. We believe that he writes from the outside of the Established Church. Within, Oxford and Cambridge are waiting for a religious philosophy. That of Professor Jowett may be very noble and very true; but it is so different from the hereditary Protestant doctrines, that the Oxonians cannot be blamed for looking askance and timidly at it.

They are in general paralyzed, from an uneasy foreboding of the dangers contingent on a close reconsideration of first principles.

Precisely because theologians will *not* reconsider first principles, but, with infinite disputes about their superstructure, are careless about their foundation, therefore it is that science tends to become *Atheistic*, alike in Protestant as in Catholic countries. The blame of this may be justly laid upon the doctrine which elaborately seeks for marks of God in everything unusual and exceptional, and denies His presence in all that is ordinary and established. We are aware that there are enlightened Protestant divines, who disapprove this position; eminently the Rev. Baden Powell, who, in the first of his "Three Essays on the Unity of Worlds," speaks as follows:—

> "According to this mode of representation [by religious writers] Nature was the *rule*, 'Deity' the *exception*. The belief in nature was the doctrine of reason and knowledge; the acknowledgment of a God was only the confession of ignorance. So long as we could trace physical laws, nature was our only and legitimate guide; when we could attain nothing better, *we were to rest satisfied with a God*. Even learned writers on natural theology have thought it pious to argue in this way."—p. 162, Second Edition. [Italics as in Mr. Powell.]

Mr. Powell's protest is right and wise; but, with deference to him, we add, it cannot be effectual unless he pull down the whole Protestant theory, of which the avowed foundation is *the miraculous—the exceptional*. It commands us, not to look within our hearts, or into human history, for the Divine, but into one miraculous book and one miraculous history. It virtually shuts God out from inspiring us now, by the stress which it lays on the *special* inspiration once granted by Him to a few. It lays down that the Jewish history is sacred, and other histories profane; and treats even the history of the Christian Church as too secular for the pulpit, from the day that the canon of Scripture was closed.

It represents that God is certainly present wherever there is miracle, but that where miracle is not, no one can be sure of the presence of God. Nothing else is meant or can be meant by the infallible and authoritative Bible, than to desecrate, in comparison to it, all the ordinary modes of learning truth, and duty, and right. In proportion to the power and activity of this theory concerning miracles and the Bible, will be the intensity with which a man embraces the exceptional and obscure phenomena of the world as the great manifestation of Deity. Undoubtedly Mr. Powell rightly regards this to tend to Atheism, for every step onward of knowledge is then a lessening and weakening of the Theist's resources. But we submit to him that we are right in insisting, that a theory which places the strength of religion in the miraculous is naturally of Atheistic tendency. It entraps into Atheism those students of science, who, having no religious philosophy of their own, borrow its fundamental principles from the Church. In fact, those writers on "Evidences," who now seem to have the field to themselves, make no secret of their conviction that Atheism is the necessary logical result of an appeal to Science, the Universe, and Man. On the one side, we see a great ecclesiast, the Rev. Dr. Irons, frankly declare that, without the authoritative and supernatural revelation by miracle, Nature preaches to us nothing concerning God. On the other, a would-be philosopher and liberal Christian, Mr. Rogers, in his "Eclipse of Faith," announces that the Atheist has the argument entirely in his own hands, as against the Deist, and that without the Bible the only God preached by Nature is an immoral or malignant Being. The learned and highly popular author of a work called "The Restoration of Belief" goes so far as to insist, that one who does not acknowledge the supernatural authority of "THE BOOK," not only ought to be an Atheist, but has no right to talk of "Conscience, Truth, Righteousness, and Sin;" and that sacrifices for Truth are in such a one "not constancy, but opinionativeness." How can Christians avoid shuddering at such avowals from their own advocates? which, if true, utterly destroy Christianity with Theism, and prepare to plunge mankind into a state of barbarous Paganism. That the Protestant theory has no future, is indicated by many marks. We have seen Arnold and Julius Hare (good, noble, able men, of peculiar acquirements) live and die without being able *to make themselves understood;* a pretty clear proof that the age has no susceptibility for their doctrine. The same is true of the Rev. Fredk. Maurice, and of the Chevalier

Bunsen. Mr. Maurice is a man of acknowledged goodness and largeness of heart; as Professor or Preacher, untiring in industry; devoted to raise the working classes; so copious a writer on theology that he will probably outdo Archbishop Whately in amount; and he has evidently undertaken as the work of his life to sublimate Church orthodoxy into a transcendental philosophy. Yet, in spite of the high commendation bestowed upon his talents and discrimination by a few, to the public at large he seems to be only subtle, flimsy, and evasive. He may be wise, but the age cannot understand him. "What *does* he mean?" is the cry which escapes from the perplexed novices who would fain admire him. Not dissimilar is the case with the accomplished Bunsen, who invests in gorgeous colours and vast pomp of intricate words a system of religious historicism, in which the common intellect can discover no solidity, no fixed shape, no firm and certain meaning. And as the new quasi-Coleridgian school proves feeble to us and dim, so neither does the old nursery rear any thriving plants.

No young Whatelys show themselves. Nobody of high reputation now writes treatises on the Trinity. Whately did but bring on himself a strong and dangerous imputation of "Sabellianism" by the remarks in his Logic on the word "Person:" Hampden half ruined himself by being too learned on the same subject. Men of the Evangelical school, who have no philosophic reputation to lose, may publish sermons on the Atonement; but a systematic treatise on this involves much risk to a man of note. Schleiermacher's "Discourse on St. Luke" was translated about twenty years ago (as was believed) by Dr. now Bishop Thirlwall: we have never heard that it has been answered by any one. Many have claimed, that the Bishop will answer it himself, since he now disavows it. Nor does any leading divine undertake to refute the works of Charles Hennell or W. R. Greg. When the wise men hold their peace under such attacks, it must be thought that they are but too conscious of the weakness of their own cause.

In consequence of the freedom which in Protestant countries many sects attain, we see from time to time the doctrine of *personal* inspiration (perhaps with some fanaticism) assert itself strongly against the *ecclesiastical*, which makes inspiration an exceptional thing of the past. Thus Whitfield, and thus Huntington the coalheaver, thus also Edward Irving were distinguished. Speculators have marked out as *revivals* such periodical recurrences of a simpler and nobler theology, but have lamented that the freshness of religious enthusiasm always decays in the second generation. Some even have elicited from this a "law" of nature: that the stage of languor follows that of excitement; or that the era of commentators follows that of men of genius. The existence of this "law" may seem plausible from the side of total unbelief; but it is difficult to understand what intelligent theory of the phenomenon can rightly recommend itself to a devout Evangelical or to any earnest Protestant. The phenomenon is not confined to our sects, nor to the ignorant and excitable. Neither in Geneva, nor in Scotland, nor in England, nor in Protestant Germany, could a second and third generation sustain the religious warmth of the first; nor indeed is it denied by Romanists that learning is the fertile mother of heresy. Assuredly, if religion be a deep and noble principle, rightful and reasonable to man, then a particular form of religion must be involved in some very essential falsehood, if its vigour and vitality are uniformly undermined by accessions to its knowledge, or by the tranquil advance of experience. A true religion can but strike its roots deeper with cultivation of mind and increase of wisdom. That must be a fundamental fanaticism which thrives only upon action and excitement, and wastes by calm examination and learning. Alike in Catholic and in Protestant countries, the world has still to wait for a religion which shall grow stronger and stronger with every development of sound scientific acquirement.

Nor perhaps is this the worst: for we must add Europe has yet to wait for a religion which shall exert any good influence over public measures. A distinguished foreigner, in his own consciousness a true Christian — whose name we could not properly here bring forward—on a recent day said, in a select circle: "I begin to doubt whether Christianity has a future in the world." "Why so?" asked one present, in surprise at such an augury from such a quarter. "Because," he replied, "neither in India, nor in America, nor anywhere at all in Europe, does any of the governments called 'Christian'—I do not say, *do* what is right, but—even affect and pretend to take the RIGHT as the law of action. Whatever it was once, Christianity is now in all the great concerns of nations a mere ecclesiasticism, powerful for mischief, but helpless and useless for good. Therefore I begin to doubt whether it has a future; for if it cannot become anything better than it is, it has no right to a future in God's world."

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.

[1859.]

CHRISTIANS have often admitted and deplored that the history of Christianity is funereal and heart-breaking: especially the animosity of Christians against one another. The violence with which sect has persecuted sect, and man man, stands in appalling and grotesque contrast to the celebrated precept of mutual love. That a religion which began by preaching that the human conscience ought to be open to conviction, and, when convinced by free preaching, ought to abandon the belief and the practices of its forefathers; a religion which professed not to take up the sword of the magistrate, but to fight only with the sword of the spirit—that this religion should, the moment it got the power, grasp at the sword, and use it against its adversaries who were pleading only with *its* legitimate weapons of reason and argument, is so hideous and mortifying a fact, as painfully to weaken men's confidence in the onward destinies of the human race. But, in truth, the phenomenon is wider and older and deeper than Christianity, which is less original than is popularly supposed, both in its better and in its worse aspects. No deeply seated error can be extirpated, until we know its secret justifications and its means of self-delusion, the fancied good at which it is aiming, and the truth for which it darkly protests.

We have to ask, not only why such men as Pius V., and Cranmer, and Calvin, and St. Bernard, and Augustine were persecutors, but also why the same was true of the excellent Emperors Decius, and Marcus Aurelius, and Trajan? I do not mean by this remark to give any opinion whether the details of the persecution ascribed to Decius and Marcus Aurelius are credible. But it appears undeniable, that the doctrines of political obedience professed in the pre-Christian age, naturally led to extreme punishment, as soon as men were found stubborn enough to oppose themselves to the religious decrees of the State. Christians, who brought in new principles, ought to have risen above the errors which infected Pagan philosophy; but they did not; on the contrary, they eagerly adopted and transmitted them exactly as did the Reformers of the 16th century, and exactly as did the English Puritans in the New World. The tendency to religious persecution must have some very deep and subtle self-justification, when it can thus arise afresh in men of strong minds, wide knowledge, and free thought, who love freedom for themselves and make high professions concerning it. To us moderns, or at least to us Protestants, it is apt to appear as a first axiom of thought, that every man has an absolute right to religious freedom; insomuch that we are embarrassed to understand how any can doubt of it. Perhaps this is because we think of religion chiefly, if not exclusively, as an *inward judgment* or *inward emotion.* Over this, it is unendurable that any should claim authority. Possibly even in the Church of Rome, even among those who now seem to us ready to go all lengths in persecution of hostile opinion, few will justify inquisitorial interrogation to elicit punishable error. The real controversy begins when religion ceases to be a purely inward fact, and comes out visibly into human life. Now, in truth the old religions were not only not inward and spiritual, but they were obtrusively public, consisting in pageantry and exhibitions, sometimes indecent and corrupting, or otherwise extravagant; for the like of which we have only to look to modern India. The ancient statesmen and philosophers, with whom it was an axiom that religion was to be controlled by the civil magistrate, had nothing else in their minds than these externalities of religion. When a new theology came before them which had no other public action than that of argument, the question whether it should be allowed freedom of speech against the constituted religion, appeared to the statesmen as one purely political. To attack by words the established ceremonial seemed to Trajan an offence of the same kind as to attack the political authority of the emperor or of the senate.

In my opinion, religious persecution, like all unjust despotism, has two sources—the pride of rulers, and confused or false theories of morality. The former is the more obvious of the two, and I do not underrate its energy as a cause of the results which we see; but it would not be so long-lived, and it could not command so much support from the intelligent, the thoughtful, and the well-meaning, if it were not abetted by a confused morality. Especially, I believe, the limits which separate morality from religion are indistinctly seen and insufficiently insisted on; and it is by the obscurity as to these limits that the functions of the civil power are imperfectly understood; out of which rises a twofold mischief. On the one side, well-meaning men who are chiefly zealous for religious freedom imagine that the State ought not to support morality; on the other, men equally well-meaning, who see that morality must be upheld, drive their doctrine into a practical advocacy of religious persecution.

The most legitimate procedure of a civil goverment, acting for the protection of morality, takes the aspect of religious persecution to a sect which has adopted some immorality as a part of its religion, and it will conduce to a full insight into the subject, if I first develop this side of it. Let me begin by the very extremest case; I will take no fictitious example, but a terrible reality. The *Thugs* of India were a religious sect. They were united by religious ceremonies, and entered upon their darkest plots with religious formalities. When they waylaid, strangled, and plundered the unsuspecting traveller, they returned thanks to the Deity who had aided them, and glorified him with presents in their own fashion. None of us can suppose that all of these men had clear consciences, and that the forms of religion entirely overcame the remonstrances of natural feeling. No more can we imagine that religious murderers in Europe have been free from the qualms of conscience. But undoubtedly all religious ceremonies have wonderful power in enabling men to perpetrate evil deeds with self-complacency; and they cannot have been wholly ineffective in the case of the Thugs. Hence to these men, just in proportion as they were possessed by religious fanaticism, as distinguished from mere ruthless cupidity, the English government which hunted them down and hanged them must have appeared as an armed enemy to their religion. But the Thugs, it may be well pleaded, took up the rope, and they could not complain if they perished by the rope. Let us proceed to somewhat less extreme cases, and it will immediately appear how very important to the English government in India, in Singapore, in Hongkong, it is, to hold sound and sharply defined doctrines on this subject. Until a recent day, the Brahmin priests all but universally taught as a part of religion, that a *widow* performed a pious duty in *burning herself* on her husband's funeral pile. They had been accustomed for ages to assist in the immolation; and when the English first began to move against it, a cry was raised of religious persecution. Happily men rose into places of power, who had strength of mind to despise that cry, and who clearly understood, that as no immorality can be justified by a plea of religion, so neither can it be sheltered by such a plea; and that there lies the same duty on the civil government to put down this atrocity, as to put down the murder of travellers under the forms and pretences of religion. *Infanticide* is a third instance. In India, as in China, it has been a simple custom, and not, I believe, a religious rite, except in pursuance of a voluntary vow, which concerned the individual and not the priestly body collectively. But this is an accidental distinction. If the Brahminical religion had even prescribed infanticide in certain cases, none of us will think that that could have altered the duty of the civil government to act against it. All that we can say in this direction is, that when a government is separated by a vast chasm from the religious sympathies of the people, it may sometimes perhaps plead the weakness hence resulting as a palliation for the neglect of certain parts of its duty. But its duty to stop the killing of innocent human beings is in no case altered by the fact that some fanatical religion enjoins the murder.

Let me next advert to a case which brings us nearer home, where we have recently had a stiff controversy on the question of divorce and re-marriage. The Chinese are accustomed to Polygamy. A man of this nation settles at Singapore, marries there, and dies, leaving a widow and family. After his death a claim to his property is put in by another woman, in her own name and that of her children, who professes that he was her husband before he came to Singapore. What is the English government to do? It cannot abdicate its duty as guardian of the property. To be neutral is impossible, even if it be pretended that religion, and not civil law, is to decide what marriages are lawful. Whichever way it decides, it appears to superimpose its own opinions on to a foreign conscience; and those Englishmen who have never gained clear views on the due limits of State-action, find no guiding principle, even if the facts are clear. Among the philosophic thinkers of antiquity, the superintendence and recognition of marriages by the State was regarded as the first step out of barbarism into civilization; plainly because on this depends the due provision for the maintenance of children, and, much more, for their training to virtuous habits. Here the State and the Church are of course on common ground, as so often beside, and for that very reason are liable to clash. Again: the highly respectable and estimable community of Quakers holds a doctrine concerning the morality of military engagements and standing armies, which puts them into direct collision with the English government. It is not a very rare case for Quakers to distribute tracts among soldiers, inciting them to desert; and forthwith the whole difficulty of our question displays itself. Each side has its argument complete. The Quaker urges that the soldier's engagement is immoral; that the soldier's oath to do immoral deeds cannot be binding and ought to be broken; and that he (the Quaker) discerning this truth, is justified in publishing it and in pressing it on the soldier's conscience. The magistrate replies, that the soldier's engagement is *not* immoral; that his oath *is* binding; and that to incite him to desert is a grave offence, which it would be perilous to the State not to punish; hence, deeply as he may regret the necessity, the law must be enforced against the offender and ought not to be repealed. The Quaker bears the punishment meekly for righteousness' sake, just as did the Jew when persecuted by Antiochus Epiphanes, or the Christian by Diocletian. Yet it is difficult to see how the civil governor can do otherwise than prosecute (or, as the other party call it, persecute), until he begins to doubt whether the soldier's engagement is moral. The real collision between the parties, is on the question of morality. While they are opposed on this, the stronger party seems to persecute, and (if he is wrong) the imputation becomes just.

If indeed the magistrate attempt to blink the moral question;—if he say, that it is no business of inferiors and of private persons to inquire into the morality of the law; that it is their part blindly to obey, and his blindly to enforce; he then assumes the purely Pagan posture, which will justify every enormity and degrade law into brute violence. In this way a Roman magistrate could insist that it was the duty of citizens to sacrifice to the image of the Emperor; that it was neither his duty nor theirs to pry into the right or wrong of it; it was theirs to obey, and his to enforce obedience, at the cost of their lives, if requisite. None of us, I think, will justify the magistrate in such an argument, except as a temporary necessity. He may say in certain cases, that, even if the law be wrong, to violate it is an evil, and perhaps a far greater evil than to submit to it. But to say that its immorality is no consideration for the citizen, is evidently a horrible doctrine, which we may well stigmatize as Pagan.

Thus it is *only* where the laws are habitually called to account before the tribunal of the nation—that is, it is only where a field of debate is afforded, in which the new moral impulses of each age can claim the reform of laws which offend the conscience of citizens—that *that* collision of public law and private conscience which induces religious persecution is avoidable. For whenever the legislators have unawares enacted something opposed to true morality, or whenever the citizen through ignorance supposes a law to be immoral and believes himself bound to oppose it; conscientious disobedience is liable to be punished as a wanton folly or mischievous contumacy: and where opinions are thus opposed, the punishment of disobedience evidently may be the very highest which the law allows. Considering then how very rare in the history of nations has been the permanent maintenance of free legislative institutions, in which the fresh thought of the nation can debate against the law and keep the laws in harmony with the national conscience; it would seem that every new moral movement must tend to provoke a collision of conscience with the law, except in the most favoured nations. Such new morality generally rises out of, or with, new religion: viewed therefore in this light, religious persecution, in some form and degree, becomes a natural necessity, which, however lamentable, ought not to appal us as indicating fatal and untractable weakness in the human mind.

But it is seldom that the collision between the citizen and the State is so unmanageable as it assuredly is in this case of the Quaker, especially if the latter goes the full length of objecting to *all* national armies and weapons of war. For the State cannot recede from the duty of the public defence, and is forced to punish those, who, from however pure motives of conscience try to undermine its military resources. But in by far the largest number of instances of religious persecution, the State *can* recede from its demand and pretensions, without detriment to its legitimate efficacy for every good object. Nothing is commoner than that the ruling power which speaks in the name and authority of the State is wielded by a very few narrow minds and still narrower hearts, either ignorant, or intensely proud and wilful; and so soon as the fact comes to light, that stubborn consciences exist, which dare to resist the established rules, this is regarded as an unpardonable offence, which not only must be put down by violence, but which in itself makes "concession" (as it is called) on the part of the ruler impossible. The principle holds equally, whether the laws resisted are called ecclesiastical or are called civil: the ruling power upholds them the more severely, *expressly because they have been resisted.* That this should be done by a Church which has committed itself to the dogma of its own infallibility is less surprizing: of course the pride of power is then reinforced by the fear of seeming self-condemned, if they recede from an assertion once made. But it is from such reasoners as the ecclesiastical abettors of our Elizabeth's measures against the Puritans of her day, that the pretensions are most remarkable. They avow, maintain, and prove to their own satisfaction, that the things which the Queen is commanding are things wholly indifferent; that the Divine Head of the Church has decided nothing about them either way; and thence they infer, that the Queen may command what she pleases about them, and that all good subjects ought to obey. It is not pretended by them that the matters in question intimately concern the well-being of the State, or can be conceived as in any way politically important; as, for instance, the wearing of a surplice, the use of the ring in marriage, or the right to hold free prayer-meetings. On the contrary, the Queen's advocates treat the matters themselves with contempt, and allege that if she were to reverse all her commands, obedience would be equally due. According to them, the Queen is made to argue: "Because I think these things of no importance, and you think it a sacred duty to resist them, therefore I am resolved to break your stiff neck and teach you not to set your conscience against my commands." Such is indeed often the secret logic of Power, which, just in proportion as it is unchecked, nourishes in the heart of man an unreasonable and untractable pride.

If rulers reason thus, even when they have no religious fanaticism, how much more must we expect the same from them when that passion is superadded to the pride of power! This is the unamiable side of authority, and unhappily it is that with which we are all most familiar. But when we look away from the vices and follies of individual rulers, and consider the great ends, which in spite of this, are attained by the enforcement of law, we find the complication of the problem increase upon us. Indeed, precisely because Law is felt to be a sacred thing, religious persecution may by that very fact sometimes recommend itself to a ruler as just, and even as *politic*. This may need more careful explanation.

Mankind in general learn morality only from the Public Law. It is common to say, that we learn morals from religion; a statement which is but partially true. It has the appearance of truth, because religion has almost everywhere been established by law; and the outline of the moral code which the religion enjoins has been nationally enforced by punishing offences. Hitherto the millions of mankind have been neither philosophers nor saints: they have had too little, whether of leisure or of mental capacity, for abstract thought, and have learned both their morality and their religion chiefly from public institutions. Hence, what the Law does not punish, is, with the ignorant, thought to be right; except indeed so far as the public opinion of each neighbourhood visits certain offences with openly manifested reprobation. This also agrees with the notorious fact that human morality has grown out of forcibly imposed custom; as the very word Morals (Manners) testifies. We know that at no distant period "cattle lifting" was respectable—when it could be done with impunity. More recently, the slave trade was practised without reprobation by English wealthy firms; it is now certain of punishment by law, and is abhorred in England. The trade of the gambling house and the lottery was once about as respectable as commercial gambling now; but since it has been punished by law, it is regarded as an indefensible vice. Three bankers were lately condemned to a degrading punishment for conduct which probably their consciences had but feebly condemned, because no case of legal punishment for it had occurred. The blow fell upon them with unexpected severity; and however we condemn them, we must admit that they had received no visible warning. The pity which we are permitted to feel for them, is overpowered by the conviction that their punishment is very wholesome for the commercial public, and tends to raise commercial morality. For there is nothing which so elevates a nation collectively, as wisely severe law; when punishments fall alike on high and low, and are not so cruel as to hinder their enforcement. Such severity of law does not in itself make us virtuous; but by restraining from wrong deeds it aids to virtuous training, and lays a foundation of character on which national virtue may be happily superadded. And of all this, the heart of mankind has ever been deeply, if dimly, sensible. Out of it has arisen the reverence for Law, as for something *sacred;* and out of this again the heroic virtue of Patriotism; inasmuch as the sacredness of our country is but a reflection of the other idea, the sacredness of its Law. Indeed the national religion has itself generally been accounted sacred, not so much because it is ascertained to be true, as because it has come down from old times as a national institution. As to its *truth*—the majority of a nation has seldom thought itself competent, or found itself at leisure, for that inquiry: rather, it has accepted the religion and its morality as sacred, because it is part of the old law, and has next inferred its truth from its sacredness. Thus not only the strict national life, which is wrapt up into the sentiment of a common patriotism, but even the social morality of nations, has been largely dependent on a sense of the sacredness of law, and on the consequent resolution to uphold the law with the sternest sacrifice of all that is dearest—whether our neighbours' lives or our own.

Now every ruler is sensitively aware, that his power rests on opinion; and every wise ruler sets a profoundly high estimate on the public reverence for Law. Hence all rulers are naturally and rightly conservative, and dread any sudden breaking loose from the law, lest it lead to a general irreverence, which is equivalent to general immorality. Especially therefore when religious usages are renounced and denounced, which come down from dim antiquity and have entangled themselves with sentiment and habit so deeply that in comparison to them the ordinances of the ruling power are, as it were, common and profane; even strong minded rulers are inwardly terrified lest the preacher of such heresy should (to borrow words from the Book of "Acts") "turn the world upside down." Such was the view habitual with Roman statesmen. Gibbon has with great discernment said, that the national religions of the Roman world seemed to the vulgar all equally true, to the philosopher equally false, and to the magistrate equally useful: but, I think, the last words must be interpreted, not, that the magistrate desired the belief of folly for its tendency to blind the vulgar, but, that he recognized veneration for that which was time-honoured, as the great preservative influence among those who had so few uniting and constraining sentiments. Men like the Roman Emperors Trajan and Decius were perhaps sincerely frightened at attacks upon the public religion, lest the whole edifice fall in mass. Such attacks, though made only with the tongue, seemed to them *as* formidable to the public tranquillity as if it had been threatened by weapons of war; and any persecution, which they authorized, must be referred to the head of erroneous conservative policy.

I have added the epithet *erroneous*, because it is a policy dictated by an absence of faith in the value of Truth. Perhaps there is no virtue in which statesmen, everywhere and in every time, are more deficient. The mere military statesmen see Force and Habit as the only bonds of a nation, and dread all new Truth, even if truth it be, which would unsettle Habit. Statesmen of the diplomatist and courtierlike cast, seem to live and breathe in falsehood, so that it would be a miracle if they could venerate

Truth, or believe it to be a mighty power. The Roman Emperors, who persecuted Christianity, not because they thought it false, but because it actively assailed the imperial institutions of religion, thought to support the empire thereby: yet they only decreed its more violent concussion. It is the same with the great modern persecuting dynasty, the House of Hapsburg. The celebrated Emperor Charles V., the contemporary of Luther, when offended with the Pope, sent his generals to besiege and sack the city of Rome, shut up the Pope in the castle of St. Angelo, and ordered prayers to be offered for his deliverance. After thus sufficiently terrifying the Papal Power, and warning it never to take part against his temporal interests, he came forth as the great enemy of Protestantism, and bequeathed to his son Philip II. of Spain the advice to exterminate heresy by the sword. From that time onward the House of Hapsburg has, with short intervals, pursued this policy systematically. And with what result? Spain, under the terrors of the Inquisition, losing all freedom of expression and freedom of thought, was drained of spiritual vigour and of material strength, and sank into imbecility. The German branch of the Hapsburgs will decay similarly, if it be not violently arrested in its attempts to crush mind and free thought in its dominions. But, though it is always an erroneous policy to try to uphold falsehood by punishing those who expose it, the error of policy is less glaring and less shocking, when the religion which the rulers are seeking to uphold, has received hereditary veneration. In this point of view we are far more able to pardon persecution of Protestants by Catholics (especially when Protestantism was new and had gathered no veneration around it) than that of Protestants by Protestants. A *new* religious system, whether of Calvin or of Henry VIII., or of Elizabeth, cannot possibly have so taken up into itself the venerative faculties of a nation, that to attack it endangers the principle of veneration itself. Persecutions therefore which proceeded from early Protestantism were doubly detestable and unpardonable even when they did not go to all lengths of barbarity. Nevertheless, even here, the ruling power was liable to be led into a belief of the *policy* of persecution, which (if it were duly moderated) may be admitted to have been in some sense politic.

A rude and ignorant nation undoubtedly is apt to infer a man's *guilt* from his *punishment*. A Roman, the moment he heard that a man had been crucified, took for granted that he was a worthless rascal. The French and Italians of the present day are not wholly free from an analogous sentiment. Three or four centuries ago, if an obscure person was subjected to ignominious punishment, however severe or cruel, for an offence against Church or State, instead of exciting pity or sympathy for him, it led rather to a shuddering at the enormity of his crime. This is in strict harmony with the fact, that nations primitively learn their morality from the legal punishments of crime. In proportion as a nation is deficient in thoughtfulness and earnestness, in proportion as it is in that puerile state which has no independent morality of its own, it is liable to be impressed *against* the man who is cruelly and unjustly punished. Thus an English or a Spanish rabble looked with horror and contempt at the criminal who was burnt alive for a disbelief in transubstantiation; and the ruler who commanded the execution performed a deed temporarily politic, by eliciting that contempt and horror against the innovator. But his policy became at once self-convicted, when no longer obscure men, but those who were venerated for learning and goodness, assailed the established creed. To pass by this offence in them and punish it in others would be obvious folly. To punish them, if successful, would wither the roots of national strength and goodness (as has been done in Spain); and anything short of this would end in inducing hatred of the law as unjust and cruel. Thus in every way such policy was short-sighted; yet it was generally capable of deceiving statesmen who had no faith in truth and right.

I may remark, in passing, how it is that statesmen in particular are liable to the baneful delusion, generally known as the doctrine of Hobbes, that morality is an artificial structure, not growing up from within, but imposed from without; the creation of power, liable therefore to be rudely and suddenly overturned, if the authority which dictates it becomes despised. Of course, a ruler who believes this is apt to become a persecutor from sheer timidity. Statesmen, I think, are peculiarly liable to the delusion, because, more than other men, they are accustomed to survey, side by side, the *superficial* morality of many different nations. Superficially the contrast is often great, and veils the deep intrinsic harmonies of sentiment. When they find each nation to believe that which is established, and apparently only *because* it is established, they need some higher and maturer cultivation than routine can give, to save them from the inference that moral beliefs are essentially artificial and arbitrary.

To every narrow-minded thinker, in State or Church, acquaintance with foreign morality is dangerous and subversive. The Egyptian or Lacedæmonian dreaded foreign contact as a source of ruin: so do modern political tyrants; in each case, because they do not desire truth and right, but desire only the maintenance of that imperfect or unjust system which exists. But it is neither by the individual man, nor by separate nations, that human morality is to be tested: collective humanity is its highest criterion accessible to us. In fact, human agreement alone *distinguishes the sane in mind* from the *insane.* And in this sense only did the wise men of antiquity intend a proverb, which is so often ill-quoted and ill-understood. Hesiod did not say, and Aristotle did not reiterate, that "The voice of *the people* is the voice of God." But he said: "The sentiment which *many peoples* (many nations) utter, perishes not, but is a voice of God." And while the comparison of our own national beliefs with those of other nations must generally show us some of our own weaknesses and unteach us some errors (just as insane men are sometimes cured, when each sees how ludicrous is the other's error), the very same comparison will infallibly add the strongest confirmation to all the fundamental faiths of the human heart. And on this the practical distinction turns between the *Morality* which it belongs rightly to the State to enforce, and the *Religion* which must be left free to the individual citizens. Morality is that system of lower truths and sentiments which has already attained the suffrage of mankind at large. Religion (as distinguished from it) is that which, as yet, only higher minds have reached. In strictness no sentiment or truth can be enforced, since its nature is inward; but even the outward actions connected with religion are unsuitable for State compulsion, because the truth has not yet the confirmation of the whole human race. Thus the State rightly punishes men for frauds, for violences, and for trading in vice;—things which the conscience of man everywhere condemns: but the State cannot rightly or justly compel citizens to listen to religious teaching which they disapprove, or forbid their listening to that which they covet. For it cannot be pretended that there is as yet any practical agreement of human nature on what is especially called Religion. Men, ostensibly equally wise, differ enormously concerning it; and for the State to prejudge controversies of religion, and forbid free discussion, is as unjust, as pernicious, and as absurd, as to do the same with reference to history or physic. Problems which need the highest powers of mind and soul may be embroiled, and cannot be cleared up, by authoritative enforcements.

On the whole, I am brought to believe, that many modern Protestants and good lovers of freedom, fall into error, in laying down that "the State ought never to punish a vice because it is a vice, but only because it is a crime." They intend this as a protest for religious freedom, but miss the point of the matter. What, in fact, do they mean by *crime* in this sentence? Does not a vice become a crime, as soon as it is threatened by a degrading legal penalty? Some will say, No: but that a crime means a vice which hurts society, and that these only ought to be punished; and that the true formula is, "to punish, not vice, but vice which is hurtful to others." Then again I have to ask, what vice does not hurt society? Surely not Gambling only and Swindling, but Drunkenness and Fornication; nay, I may add, Idleness, Gluttony, Cowardice, Ingratitude, and Falsehood. These cannot indeed always be punished; either because they are undefinable to law, or because the judges would be too imperfect themselves; otherwise, any of them come beneath the legislator as fitly as Theft or a Soldier's Disobedience.

Allow me to illustrate a very old controversy by an anecdote concerning an English judge. It is related that in the last century a judge, before passing sentence on a man who was convicted of stealing a horse, asked him if he had anything further to say. "Please your honour," said the culprit, "I have only to say, I think it very hard if I am to be hanged for *only* stealing a horse." "Prisoner at the bar," replied the judge, "you will be hanged, *not because* you have stolen a horse, but *in order that* horses may not be stolen." Such a declaration from the judge, I believe, must everywhere excite popular indignation. If it were just, it would justify the well-known demand of "a man to hang," when a violent deed has been committed, without caring scrupulously whether we alighted on the real criminal. Yet a very slight change removes the paradox. The judge should have said: "not *only* because you have stolen a horse, *but also* in order that horses may not be stolen." Punishment is not *mere* retaliation for the past: it mainly studies the future: yet its justification, as between the law and the criminal, is found in *the moral guilt* of the criminal. Law would indeed be a cold-blooded enormity, if it did not rest on moral right and wrong.

The religious freedom therefore to which we are entitled, is not a freedom to do whatever may be prescribed or permitted in (what we call) our religion; nor can it claim that the State shall not desire to promote the teaching of truth, whether truth of astronomy, or of morality, or of religion. Wise rulers (as I believe) will desire the teachers of religion to teach freely, and will think it as absurd to dictate a creed in religion as in medicine; yet if, in deference to wide-spread prejudice, they go beyond the mark in imposing a creed on the public teachers, this is no restriction of *my* religious freedom. If I am unmolested by the law, and am subject to no exclusions on account of my belief, I find no personal grievance even if the ecclesiastical rules seem to me unwise. The religious freedom that we need, and on which we must insist, is, freedom to be as good, and as upright, and as wise, as our individual nature admits. But all freedom hangs together, and civil freedom eminently depends on public morality. The friends of freedom make a pernicious blunder, if they demand freedom in such a form as to promote public vice. An ignorant or dissolute people become the unscrupulous tools of tyranny. It has often been a policy with crafty rulers to undermine constitutional morality by promoting ruinous vices. The very opposite policy is ours. Everything that promotes our national virtue promotes our freedom. A high Tory government, a narrow-minded court, if sound in moral intention and bent in promoting the virtue of the nation, will, in so far as they do promote it, lay the foundations unintentionally of a deeper and broader freedom, which will ere long sweep away all that was petty in their prejudices. But a ministry or court which calls itself popular, yet promotes debauchery, frivolity, recklessness, falsehood, and other vice, saps civil freedom, unless it soon encounter national indignation.

I therefore cannot but look on those as inadvertently playing into the enemy's hand, who, in zeal for what they call Religious Freedom, thwart every practical method of carrying moral and religious instruction home to the millions of the community. The Clergy of the Church, in demanding exclusive rights of teaching; the Dissenting Community, in refusing to them all facilities; alike seem to me to do mischief. If those who are, shall I say *outside?* or *above?* both these parties, were to lend their whole strength temporarily to reinforce the Church, so far as concerns the teaching of those who are in danger of sinking into an immorality which is essential slavery, I believe they would do a good work, even in the cause of true freedom. And as regards that particular side of religious freedom, to which *you* of late have given peculiar attention—I mean, our right to employ the hours of Sunday in the free contemplation of the objects of nature, and of the high works of art; assuredly, your strongest ground lies in the superiority of your moral position. If the Sabbatarians could prove that their restrictions promote the public morality, then, though their pretended "Scripturalism" is a mere fanatical blunder, they still would have a practical advantage over you. If indeed they began by shutting up the beer-shops and gin-palaces, before shutting the Crystal Palace, it would give at least some new plausibility to their case. But now the whole moral argument rests on your side, and indeed is stronger, the more closely it is examined. Endless experience proves, that, on the great scale, intellectual and moral debasement promote one another; so do intellectual and moral advancement. Wherever the clergy cannot or do not elevate the intellect, they assuredly will not raise the moral state of a neglected population: and as they have no power to force men into the churches, they can do nothing but harm by forbidding the opening of places which stimulate pure and elevating thought. On the other hand, those who are jaded by toil in a close atmosphere, derive from the air and scenes of the country, as well as from other beautiful or striking sights, a healthier tone both of body and of mind. From the day that you make it manifest that your law of *freedom* is purer and loftier than their law of *slavery*, your triumph becomes assured: for the people of England, though often unduly prejudiced, are no mere bigots, and every Parliament is sure to be freer-minded than the people. The time is in many respects propitious. Statesmen are alarmed at "the dangerous classes," and are disgusted by the endless contests of rival churches; and in these churches the younger men are learning, that vice and ignorance are our common enemies, worse than what is called heresy. I do believe that the best men in every different phase of opinion concerning religion are learning to think better of one another, and to see that the energies of *all* are needed for the common work. Do not plead for Sunday freedom as though personal indulgence were wanted (vicious indulgence alas! is too easily had): but hold up, first to your own mind, and to that of others, the great cause of national virtue, to be promoted by intellectual expansion and pure recreations. If you are honest in this desire, it will overpower superstitious scruples; and, what is more, it will tend to break down *that* form of religious intolerance which the law cannot hinder—the social persecution which springs out of inveterate prejudice. But if our moral aim is high and pure, we shall gradually overcome. Being in this matter acceptable to God, we shall be approved of men.

JOWETT AND THE BROAD CHURCH.

[1859.]

ABRIDGED FROM "THE WESTMINSTER REVIEW."

The Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, Galatians, Romans: with Critical Notes and Dissertations. By Benjamin Jowett, M.A., Fellow and Tutor of Balliol College, Oxford.* In two volumes. London. 1855.

IT is very convenient for statesmen who want to carry some measure, and for reasoners who dislike complications and puzzles, when the characters of men distribute themselves naturally into a very few types. To classify them, to predict or recount their doings, to marshal the forces of a party, to pass sentence on sects, is then a comparatively easy task. Such is the state of ruder and emphatically of barbarous times; such, in comparison to the present, was the state of the Anglican Church in the last century.

In the old Tory days, although then as at every time individual clergymen existed whose character was too rich and varied to be sketched by one rude outline, yet the great majority of ecclesiastics were easily to be recognized as either of the High, else of the Low Church; and the High might be described as the worldly and the learned, except that the same man was often both.

The Broad Church includes, as its very name may suggest, types of character largely distinct, the lowest of which was obvious enough in a past day. We mean that of the clergyman, in whom other accomplishments not properly theological so predominate, that his clerical character seems but an accident, and his large toleration of dissentients savours more of the strong-minded man of the world than of the tender-hearted spiritualist. But what is practically new in the Broad Church is the union of learning, science, comprehensive charity, devotional character, and sufficient orthodoxy to remain in the Anglican ministry. In a stage of knowledge which cannot recur, men like Cudworth or Hooker might combine these qualities; but since the development of modern physics, nothing of the sort seemed possible; and probably the English public was incredulous of it, until the revelation of Dr. Arnold's character took them by surprise. Arnold had great simplicity and force of moral sense. Intellectually, he was first-rate in nothing; but he had what Bacon defines as great "capacity"—the quality most needed by a statesman. He had enough learning to estimate learning and borrow it; sufficient idea of the need of a theological philosophy to be a respectful listener to all philosophies, while modestly attaching himself to one. To a superficial observer he might seem not to be a devotedly religious man, because he was an ardent politician: but his religion embraced politics as a part of duty, and aspired to Christianize all worldly action. To compare him, as to the depth of his devotional principles, with this or that Evangelical, is no problem for us. Suffice it here to say, that he clearly had enough of inward religion to understand and appreciate that of other men of every school, and that while he lived he was vilified by those Evangelical organs which would now gladly claim him as one of their worthies.

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* Since Regius Professor of Greek.

Another good man, lately deceased, may be here named for honour as still more characteristic of the Broad Church than Arnold, because he was neither schoolmaster nor politician, but long devoted his great accomplishments and peculiar genius exclusively to theological action;—we mean Archdeacon Julius Hare. His defects as an observer of life were more than compensated by a certain passionate inwardness. In doctrinal theory he perhaps approached the Evangelicals more nearly than did Arnold, of which indeed his fervent admiration of Luther may seem to be an indication. But his theoretical and practical estimate of learning, his efforts for scientific treatment, his Platonic and historical erudition, as well as his wide sympathies for good men of every creed, separate him from the Evangelical school, and award him to the Broad Church. Such a man was a singular phenomenon forty and thirty years ago. We dare not sit as judges to say who or how many remain with us as his equals; but without presumption we may express the belief that clergymen now abound who are popularly referred to the High Church, or perhaps even to the Puseyites, but really are of too noble and rich a character for any of the current appellations; who esteem and pursue learning and science as essential to religion, who disdain and grieve over the narrowness of the Evangelicals and their devotion to systems of words, who nevertheless have as much fervour of religion as would set their credit high for sanctity if they would adopt the Evangelical exclusiveness.

The vast improvement which the High Church (in laity as well as clergy) has undergone since the days of Wesley and Romaine, of itself makes the position of the old Low Church absurd and mischievous, and marks it to belong to a bygone system as much as that of Romanism. The perpetual assumption that they were peculiarly and solely "the people of God," the true Israel, the regenerate, and that all who did not hold their formulas and enter their freemasonry were "the world that lieth in wickedness," has tainted them with unreality, with foppery, and with absurdity. To pay this homage to their superiority is the passport to their sympathies, to refuse it is to ensure that one shall be looked at as but "almost a Christian." We do not mean wholly to deny that the general increase of research and knowledge has reached this part of the clergy; nevertheless, that other primitive error of their founders—contempt of learning and of all profound inquiry—has entailed on the school collectively (alike in Church and in Dissent) a peculiar weakness of mind, which is felt through every page of their writing. They never even attempt to sound a moral question to the bottom. They reason incessantly, yet they would not have other men reason; they claim a right to despise both the argumentative and the perceptive powers of others. They profess that they possess the Spirit of God, but are amazed and moralize if others make the same profession. They imagine that the tones of prophecy which the first Evangelicals adopted against drunkenness and other sensualities, against low worldliness, against grasping covetousness, against slave-dealing or election bribery, can have weight in *their* mouths against men who are ostensibly their equals in noble aims and pure morals, and possibly their superiors in knowledge, talents, and age. So long as they imbibe with their first strong religious emotions the dogma that thenceforward they are to confine thought and analysis to the process of *justifying* the Scripture and *harmonizing* it with itself, they must continue, we suppose, to degenerate.

Clergymen may indeed be named who, on the whole, would popularly be referred to the Evangelicals, and nevertheless show more zeal for the public virtue than for notions. We should be sorry to think that so numerous a body is surrendered to unfruitful mysticism; yet we cannot mistake in judging that it is the "Broad Church" to which alone a thoughtful and reasonable Anglican can look with pride. Many of this class have achieved the task of being able to understand their opponents, which is at once the token and cause of superiority. So long as two parties are deaf to one another or incapable of sympathy, each loses a precious advantage. The Broad Church now not only has its ear open to the voice of antiquity, as the Puseyites and as their predecessors the learned clergy, but is bold enough to read German theology, German philosophy, and, boldest of all, the writings of English heresy. Their principal men are aware that they speak and write, not to an artificial audience, but to the nation, and that as the nation hears every side of a question, so must its instructors, if they are to be respected by the classes which have the highest accomplishment. It is in this openness to listen with candour, far more than by any definite doctrine, that the Broad Church is contrasted at once to the High Church and to the Evangelicals, and claims, as of course, such men as Arnold, Hampden, and Julius Hare. The contrast is seen at its maximum in actual controversy. When we consider the evil eminence which divines have attained for disingenuousness, we become aware how high a virtue the Broad Church has here achieved, under circumstances peculiarly trying. It is not by accident that in the popular writings of Romanist divines, equally as in those of the Evangelicals, misrepresentation assumes proportions so startling and odious. In each case it results from the limited reading of those who are to be taught; in each the bigotry which has been instilled into the pupils reacts upon the teachers. The Evangelical preacher or writer is well aware that his hearers and readers will not examine for themselves the heretical work which he is criticising and condemning: there is no more danger of this than in the case of the Romanist. He is then safe in almost any amount of misrepresentation. It may be complained of, it may be exposed, but it will not be believed by the docile flock, who will always be rather sure that a heretic is absurd and profane than that its venerated teacher is calumnious. On the other hand, if the Evangelical critic desires to be candid, or even to be drily just, he finds it hard to act this part without danger to his own reputation. All kind or admiring words from him must be neutralized by censure or contempt, else he will seem to be recommending parley with the foe. What is worse, when he quotes in order to seem just, it is *offensive* in him to quote so fairly and fully as to allow the adversary to speak for himself. In fact, to do this, is to put "persuasive error" before those who could not, without presumption, encounter the danger and defilement of listening. So urgent is this difficulty, that it seems to overpower alike all natures in Evangelical criticism; and to make the amiable and the bitter, the candid and the perverse, alike essentially unfair: indeed, if all of that school needed to engage in controversy, it would end in the result, that none but the narrow-minded could possibly stay in it. Evidently its normal mode of dealing with an opponent is to select out of his opinions and expressions whatever are conceived to be most revolting to its readers or hearers;—carefully to omit everything likely to win their sympathies and their approbation, but present the offensive parts without the reasons for them, and often without any softening from their context; then, by so moralizing on them as to make their author despicable or odious, to confirm the audience in the resolution never to brook either his writings or his presence. We from without, keeping as clear as we please from this atmosphere of falsehood, perhaps ill understand the distress occasioned by it to those who move within it, while discerning its iniquity. Expressions of intense disgust occasionally heard show the indignation and shame for their Church and their order excited in the nobler minds of the clergy by the arts of Evangelical controversy.

How vast and wonderful is the change when we turn to such a man as Professor Jowett, whom, without disrespect to others we suppose we may entitle the foremost mind in the Anglican Church. In subtlety and breadth conjoined, possibly Mr. Maurice may be his equal, but who can for a moment claim for him equal clearness and masculine vigour? Who ever yet has complained that he cannot understand Jowett? Even in dealing with the topics which inferior minds overcloud by foreign scholasticism, he writes with English idiomatic simplicity, as a man ought to do who thoroughly understands himself, and is not hiding his meaning. Nor is his clearness attained by keeping on the surface of his subject. He probes it to the bottom, generally as frankly and fearlessly as a man of science ought, and with the delicate feeling of one to whom profound religious experience is not strange. We could mention more than one honourable name among the English clergy who have learned from physical science a candour and breadth hitherto rare with professed divines; but the training of mere physics, like that of the political historian, is apt to engender very superficial views of a great religious movement and of its leading minds. What is stranger still (or sadder still, the pseudo-orthodox may say), Jowett is not overwhelmed by the greatness of the apostle whose doctrine and character he expounds. Julius

Hare was not able to admire Luther without becoming partially blind to his weak side; to such an extent, as to run to the verge of apparent insincerity in disguising Luther's fatalistic doctrine when it was reproved by the late Sir W. Hamilton: but Jowett is quite open-eyed to every error into which Paul fell. Without denying or softening them, he shows how they rose out of the position and the age, and were inseparable from the rest of the character. Neander could scarcely follow the religious experience of Paul with greater subtlety: Strauss would not have dissected it more impartially. On the whole, we are disposed to say, that for the first time has the combined learning, fairness, religious sentiment, and profound thought of modern Germany been exhibited in an Anglican divine, and that with a directness and simplicity more English than German.

As regards his adversaries within his own Church, Jowett has an advantage, not only in the general progress of the last thirty years, but also in the fact that they have blunted their horns in attacks on Hampden, on Arnold, and even on Pusey. The ground of offence which he has given, is graver than that of Hampden, but he has been assailed with only a small fraction of the bitterness and fanaticism by which for a time Hampden was overwhelmed. Not but that by his own conduct Jowett has in part earned this difference. For it cannot be denied that Hampden bent to the storm, so changing his tone as to give countenance to the imputation of dishonesty; and altogether he appeared to have too much dejection and too much personal feeling for a man who sat in the chief theological chair, and whose conscience was on his own side. As Professor of Greek, not of Theology, Jowett has not the same leading position as Hampden had; but neither does he give so much permanent irritation to adversaries.* His book is much more than a challenge; much more than a repository of learning; it is a mine of thought. To it of necessity young academicians will have recourse to study the problem of uniting free masculine knowledge with the Christian religion, and, if possible, with Anglican subscriptions. Whether Mr. Jowett's disciples will be able to solve that problem in the same direction as he, is a question for the future.

The work consists of two volumes, of which the first deals with the two Epistles to the Thessalonians, and that to the Galatians;

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* We are unwilling to believe that the effort is made to cripple his pecuniary resources: a mean form of combat.

the second with the Epistle to the Romans. The Greek text is given according to the reading of Lachmann, and is translated anew in parallel pages. We observe that he does not shrink from following Lachmann in so punctuating Rom. ix. 5, as to deprive Trinitarians of a text by which they are accustomed to prove against "Socinians" that Christ is "God over all, blessed for ever." To the text and translation are appended ample footnotes in English. But the most characteristic part of the book is in the Introductions and numerous Essays which it contains; and the mere titles of these may interest our readers.

I. Genuineness of the First Epistle (to the Thessalonians).
  Thessalonica.
  Date and Place of Writing.
  Evils in the Church of the Apostolic Age.
  On the belief in the Coming of Christ in the Apostolic Age.
  On Paley's Horæ Paulinæ.
II. Genuineness of the Second Epistle (to the Thessalonians).
  Time and Place of the Second Epistle.
  On the Man of Sin.
III. Galatia. Genuineness, &c. &c.
  On the Conversion of St. Paul.
  Fragment on the Character of St. Paul.
  St. Paul on the Twelve.
  Paley on the Galatians.
  On the Quotations from the Old Testament in the New.
  St. Paul and Philo.
IV. Time and Place (of the Epistle to the Romans).
  On the Connexion of Immorality and Idolatry.
  On the State of the Heathen World.
  On the Abstract Ideas of the New Testament.
  On the Modes of Time and Place in Scripture.
  The Old Testament.
  On the Imputation of the Sin of Adam.
  On Conversion and Changes of Character.
  Contrasts of Prophecy.
  Casuistry.
  Natural Religion.
  The Law as "the Strength of Sin."
  On Righteousness by Faith.
  The Doctrine of the Atonement.
  On Predestination and Free-will.

Out of so ample a supply of matter it is impossible to give more than specimens, and yet we feel disagreeably that we cannot do justice to Professor Jowett by any partial quotations. The merit of thorough research and wise decision is not to be seen through in short compass; nor indeed will any of our readers duly make acquaintance with the author through us, unless we can persuade them to peruse the original.

If, under the idea of gratifying them, we were briefly to sum up his conclusions, omitting his arguments and his modifications and of necessity losing the phraseology and style, we might commit exactly the unfairness which we reprobate in Evangelical critics. Nevertheless, we must try by extracts to give some insight into Professor Jowett's method and tone.

In the essay on the Connexion of Immorality and Idolatry, vol. ii. p. 64, he writes:—

> "[The connexion] is first to be sought for in their origin. As the Christian religion may be regarded as the great pillar and rock of morality, so the heathen religions sprang up in an age prior to morality. We see men in the dawn of the world's history, just raised above the worship of stocks and stones, 'making to themselves gods to go before them.' These gods represent partly the maxims and opinions of uncivilized races, partly the actions and passions of mankind in general, partly the irregularity of the course of the world itself, the fearful law of which is the wayward fancy of heaven. Must not such an enthronement of injustice above tend to confuse and stunt the natural ideas of morality?" . . . . "Idolatry is a sort of religious passion, almost on a level with physical want, which from time to time bursts forth, and gives rein to every other passion. In the presence of the gods themselves in the idol's temple, as the festive pomp passes or the mystic hymn sounds, there is a place for sensuality. It is not repugnant, but acceptable to them and a part of their service. Impure religious rites are not the invention of magicians or priests, but deeply rooted in human nature itself. Like every other impulse of man, sensual love seeks to find expression, and perceives likenesses and resemblances of itself in the world around. It is one of the elements of Nature Worship, consecrated by antiquity, and in later times graced and half-concealed by Art."

> "But besides this direct connexion between idolatry and every form of moral evil, there is also an indirect and general influence which it exercised, even in its better form, adverse to morality. Not from religion, but from philosophy, came the higher aspirations of the human soul in Greece and Rome. Idolatry detains men in the world of sight: it offers an outward form to the eye and imagery to the fancy: it draws the many-coloured veil of art over the corruption of human nature. It heals the strife of man with himself superficially. It takes away the conscious want of the higher life, but leaves the real need. But Morality has to do with an unseen world. It has no form nor comeliness, when separated from the hope which the gospel holds out. It is severe and stoical in its demands. It tells men to look within: it deepens the battle with self. It presents duty almost as an abstraction, which in the face of death they must pursue, though there be no reward here, though

their names perish for evermore. The spirit of all idolatry is the very opposite of this: it bids men rest in this world; it pacifies them about another. The nature of God, who is the ideal and perfection of all morality, it lowers to the level of man: the virtue which is above, the truth which is beyond us, it embodies in the likeness of the human form, or the wayward and grotesque fancies of the human mind. It bids us seek without for what can only be found within.''—p. 66.

It would gratify us much if the same author would discuss from the same point of view the moral influences of modern poetical pantheism; how far akin to, how far differing from, the old idolatry. It would be too much to expect from him a discussion whether Christianity, like the older religions, has not stereotyped as for eternity the morality which was highest in its day, but is not the highest now, nor hereafter.

Virtually on the same subject he adds:—

"[It] is a sad reflection, which we would fain conceal from ourselves, and yet cannot avoid making, when contemplating the glorious Athens, its marvels of art and beauty, its deeds of patriotism, its speculations of wisdom and philosophy; not perhaps without the thought flashing across our minds that there was a phase of human life in that old Paganism, which in Christianity has never been developed in equal perfection, and from which even Christianity may be said to have borrowed something which it has incorporated with itself. The reflection is this:—That if the inner life had been presented to us of that period which in political greatness and in art is the most brilliant epoch of humanity, we should have turned away from the sight with loathing and detestation. The greatest admirers of old heathen virtues, the men endowed with the finest sensibilities for beauty and form, would feel at once that there was a great gulph fixed between us and them, which no willingness to make allowance for the differences of ages and countries would enable us to pass."—p. 70.

We turn to a more purely theological controversy to exhibit Mr. Jowett's mode of treatment:—

"How slender is the foundation in the New Testament for the doctrine of Adam's sin being imputed to his posterity! *two* passages of St. Paul at most, and these of uncertain interpretation. The little cloud no bigger than a man's hand has covered the heavens. To reduce such subjects to their proper proportions we should consider, first, what space they occupy in Scripture; secondly, how far the language used respecting them is literal or figurative; thirdly, whether they agree with the more general truths of Scripture and our moral sense, or are not 'rather repugnant hereto;' fourthly, whether their origin may not be prior to Christianity, or traceable in the after-history of the Church; fifthly, how far to ourselves they are anything more than words."—p. 162.

Just and necessary as are all these topics, or rather heads of refutation, the reader can hardly fail to remark how adapted they are to cause a panic in High and Low Church alike. The corruptions of Romanism and the systems of Augustine, Anselm, and Calvin, which predominate in the Protestant confessions, were alike developed out of the text of Scripture by a flagrant neglect of the four first canons of interpretation. The fifth is the most terrible of all; yet Mr. Jowett fearlessly applies it in few but decisive words :—

> "It is hardly necessary to ask the further question, what meaning we can attach to the imputation of sin and guilt which are not our own, and of which we are unconscious. God can never see us other than we really are, or judge us without reference to all our circumstances and antecedents. If we can hardly suppose that He would allow a fiction of mercy to be interposed between ourselves and Him, still less can we imagine that he would interpose a fiction of vengeance. If He requires holiness before He will save, much more (may we say in the Apostle's form of speech) will He require sin before he dooms us to perdition. Nor can anything be in spirit more contrary to the living consciousness of sin, of which the Apostle everywhere speaks, than the conception of sin as dead, unconscious evil, originating in the act of an individual man in the world before the flood."—p. 166.

This paragraph reminds us of an avowal of Channing, in his "Moral Argument against Calvinism,"—that it is a creed which men must outgrow by the strengthening of the mind; a creed for rude and childish nations only. Channing ought indeed to have extended the remark to the ecclesiastical theology of all Christendom; for if the doctrinal scheme of the Reformers is based on a crude philosophy, much more are the specific tenets and practices of Romanism pre-eminently childish. But we apprehend it is impossible for an Anglican to read such a paragraph as the last quoted without feeling how intensely puerile and unmeaning some other "orthodox" doctrines must be to Mr. Jowett. The offence of his work is far less in any definite results than in the whole tone and scope, which is too manly and simple to evade broad facts or skulk into the hiding-place of unmeaning words.

On "sudden conversions" Mr. Jowett writes with much discernment :—

> "In the sudden conversions of the early Christians we observe three things which either tend to discredit or do not accompany* the working of a similar power among ourselves. First, that conversion was marked by ecstatic and unusual phenomena; secondly, that it fell upon whole multitudes at once; thirdly, that though sudden, it was permanent.
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> "When we consider what is implied in such expressions as 'not many wise, not many learned' were called to the knowledge of the truth, we can scarcely

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* This appears to say that modern sudden conversions are never permanent. But in the rest of the essay we find Mr. Jowett to hold that sudden conversions of *creed* do not occur in modern days (qy. Mormonites?), and that sudden *moral* conversions are often permanent.

avoid feeling that there must have been much in the early Church which would have been distasteful to us as men of education; much that must have worn the appearance of excitement and enthusiasm. Is the mean conventicle, looking almost like a private house, more like that first assembly of Christians in the large upper room; or the Catholic Church, arrayed in all the glories of Christian art? Neither of them is altogether like in spirit perhaps, but in externals the first. . . . If we try to embody in the mind's eye the form of the first teachers, and still more of their followers, we cannot help reading the true lesson, however great may be the illusions of poetry or of art . . And when we look at this picture 'full in the face,' however we might by nature be inclined to turn aside from it, or veil its details in general language we cannot deny that many things that accompany the religion of the uneducated now, must then also have accompanied the Gospel preached to the poor. There must have been, humanly speaking, spiritual delusions, where men lived so exclusively in the spiritual world. There were scenes which we know took place such as St. Paul says would make the unbeliever think that they were mad. The best and holiest persons among the poor and ignorant are not entirely free from superstition, according to the notions of the educated. . . . Could our nerves have borne to witness the 'speaking with tongues,' or the administration of baptism, or the love-feasts as they probably existed in the early Church?

"This difference between the feelings and habits of the first Christians and ourselves must be borne in mind in relation to the subject of conversion. For as sudden changes are more likely to be met with amongst the poor and uneducated in the present day, it certainly throws light on the subject of the first conversions, that to the poor and uneducated the Gospel was first preached. And yet these sudden changes were as real, nay more real, than any gradual changes which take place among ourselves. The Stoic or Epicurean philosopher who had come into an assembly of believers speaking with tongues would have remarked that among the vulgar religious extravagances were usually short-lived. But it was not so. There was more than he had eyes to see, or than was dreamed of in a philosophy like his. Not only was there the superficial appearance of poverty and meanness and enthusiasm, from a nearer view of which we are apt to shrink, but underneath this, brighter from its very obscurity, purer from the meanness of the raiment in which it was apparelled, was the life hidden with Christ and God. There, and there only, was the power which made a man humble instead of proud, self-denying instead of self-seeking, spiritual instead of carnal, a *Christian* instead of a *Jew;* which made him embrace not only the 'brethren,' but the whole human race, in the arms of His love."—p. 199.

In passing, we may express a hope that with the increasing education of the Jews some historian will arise among them to set forth the obverse side of Jewish proselytism, which Christian writers generally suppress or deform. Mr. Jowett maintains that the Christians at Rome to whom Paul wrote his Epistle were principally Gentiles, who had first become Jewish proselytes of the gate. The very fact that the Jewish teachers habitually admitted Gentiles to participate in religious instruction and worship, without exacting that they should become entire Jews, of itself shows, that an extravagant zeal for imposing their national law beyond the limits of their nation and country can only have been the fanaticism of a few. There is a remarkable account in Josephus (book xx. chap. 2) concerning conversions in the court of Adiabene, in which three Jewish missionaries are mentioned, only one of whom (Eleazar, recently arrived from Galilee) displays any zeal for circumcision and the law. The young Prince Izates becomes a convert to Jewish monotheism at a neighbouring court, and simultaneously his mother Helena is converted at home. On his return to become king of Adiabene, he is troubled with scruples of conscience about his uncircumcised state; but his desire to obey the law in detail is vehemently opposed by his instructor (the Jewish merchant Ananias*) who threatens to leave the country if the king vex his subjects by what they would regard as an unbecoming act; and urges that "if at all risk he is resolved to emulate the hereditary religion of the Jews, he can even without circumcision revere (*σέβειν*) God; and this is of higher importance than circumcision (*τοῦτο εἶναι κυριώτερον τοῦ περιτέμνεσθαι*)." For awhile his remonstrance is successful; but the reading of the sacred book so affects the king, that the new missionary from Galilee easily wins him to circumcision. His mother and kinsmen become zealous in the same direction, to the great disgust of the nobility and a consequent civil war. Here we do indeed see, as among ourselves, that the bigot who has the letter of the sacred law on his side fights with advantage against him who contends for a higher principle. Nevertheless, the truth seems to come out, that, before and independently of the preaching of Paul, Jewish missionaries were proclaiming to the Gentiles the grand truths of Hebrew monotheism, unfettered by any specifically Jewish observances. Considering the outrageous persecutions of Jews by Christians—persecutions which probably lasted a thousand years, and are scarcely fully ended yet—we would suggest to Mr. Jowett whether the contrast of the words *Christian* and *Jew*, which through our self-complacency is current as denoting liberality and narrowness, does not deserve to be reconsidered by a scholar of his wide impartiality. It was a pure Jew who, perhaps for the first time, proclaimed to the world the equality of all nations before God. "In that day . . . the Lord of Hosts shall bless, saying: Blessed be *Egypt my people*, and *Assyria the work of my hands*, and Israel my inheritance."

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* The sameness of name to the Christian instructor of Paul is curious. The date is about A.D. 45, in the reign of Claudius.

In the course of the long and excellent essay on "Conversion and Changes of Character," Mr. Jowett takes occasion to express his dissent from Bishop Butler's celebrated theory of passive and active habits; a theory which, we believe, has become more easily dominant in Oxford, because it blends naturally with the somewhat exaggerated estimate of habit as a constituent and origin of virtue, which is fundamental in the Aristotelic ethics. The public recitation of creeds, even when we do not as yet believe them, has been publicly justified in Oxford by an eminent Puseyite (who has since passed over to Rome), on this ultra-Aristotelic ground, that the *habit* of recitation is an appointed means to belief. Mr. Jowett here as elsewhere cuts away the ground for all such extravagances, by propounding deeper and truer views of spiritual action:—

> "We are conscious that at particular times we have undergone great revolutions or emotions; and then again have intervened periods lasting perhaps for years, in which we have pursued the even current of our way. Our progress towards good may have been *in idea* an imperceptible and regular advance; *in fact*, we know it to have been otherwise. We have taken plunges in life; there are many eras noted in our existence. The greatest changes are those of which we are the least able to give account, and which we feel the most disposed to refer to a superior power. . . . Why we suddenly see a thing in a new light is often hard to explain; why we feel an action to be right or wrong, which has previously seemed indifferent, is not less inexplicable. We fix the passing dream or sentiment in action; the thought is nothing, the deed may be everything. That, day after day, to use a familiar instance, the drunkard will find abstinence easier, is probably untrue; but that from *once* abstaining he will gain a fresh experience and receive a new strength and inward satisfaction, which may result in endless consequences, is what every one is aware of. *It is not the sameness of what we do, but its novelty*, which seems to have such a particular power over us; *not the repetition of many blind actions, but the performance of a single conscious one*, that is the birth to a new life. . . . . Nor is it less true that by the commission, not of many, but of a single act of vice or crime, an inroad is made into our whole moral constitution, which is not proportionably increased by its repetition. The *first* act of theft, falsehood, or other immorality, is an event in the life of the perpetrator which he never forgets. . . .
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> "Changes of character come more often in the form of feeling than of reason, from some new affection or attachment, or alienation of our former self, rather than from the slow growth of experience, or a deliberate sense of right and duty."—p. 209.

How different is all this in depth of knowledge from that which used to pass for moral and religious philosophy with the old High Church.

We wish that space would allow us to make other and ampler quotations from the masses of excellent matter before us, which show remarkably Mr. Jowett's strong common sense, side by side with his metaphysical acuteness and spiritual tenderness. Sometimes he may seem to us rather needlessly ample, as in his discussion on "The Law as the Strength of Sin;" in which he comes round to the simple and, we do not doubt, correct conclusion, that Paul often and habitually uses the word sin to mean "conscience of sin," that is, a guilty conscience. In short, the impossibility of obeying the law under the changes of time and place, filled the scrupulous votary with despair.

Many who have heard sermons innumerable on "Righteousness by Faith," might feel a certain dismay at being invited to read an essay on it by any clergyman, even by Mr. Jowett; but the freshness of his discussion is surprising. Sir James Macintosh perhaps surprised some of his contemporary philosophers, by his version of Luther's doctrine of justification by faith.

> "The enormities of Tetzel found Luther busied in the contemplation of the principle *which is the basis of all ethical judgment*, and by the power of which he struck a mortal blow at superstition. 'Men are not made truly righteous by performing certain actions which are externally good; but men must have righteous principles in the first place, and then they will not fail to perform virtuous actions.' . . . The general terms here used enunciate a proposition equally certain and sublime; the basis of all pure ethics, the cement of the external alliance between morality and religion, and the badge of the independence of both on the low motives and dim insight of human laws."*

Sir James confines his view to the moral thought, which was the proper basis of Luther's doctrine; Mr. Jowett shows a stronger sense of the Reformer's weak side:—

> "Why not repeat (says he, p. 447), with a slight alteration of the words rather than the meaning of the apostle, 'Neither justification by faith nor justification by works, but a new creature?' Was there not yet a more excellent way—to oppose things to words—the life and spirit and freedom of the Gospel to the deadness and powerlessness and slavery of the Roman Church? So it seems natural to us to reason, looking back after an interval of three centuries on the weary struggle, so absorbing to those who took part in it once, so distant now either to us or them. But so it could not be. The temper of the times, and the education of the Reformers themselves, made it necessary that one dogmatic system should be met by another. The scholastic divinity had become a charmed circle, and no man could venture out of it, though he might oppose or respond within it. And thus justification by faith and justification by works became the watchwords of two parties."

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* Macintosh's "England."—Lardner's "Cyclopædia," vol. ii. p. 139. See the excellent comments of Mr. Sandford on the Calvinistic Puritanism as a *personal* religion ("Studies of the Great Rebellion," pp. 65—75), which are worthy of Macintosh or of Jowett.

He proceeds to analyse the meaning of faith, and shows that the controversy vanishes into thin air of itself. With a deeper study of substance, the word-controversies of the schoolmen generally disappear. Even the awful questions of predestination and free-will share the common fate of scholasticism; for reasonable controvertists discover that they either mean fundamentally the same thing, though they use different language, or at worst make different sides of their doctrine predominant. As to the freedom of the will, so great is the difficulty of just expression, that nothing is commoner than verbal and unreal controversy. None who maintain human freedom intend to assert that the will, any more than the arm and hand, is an infinite force; but simply that it has a force of its own, like the hand and arm. The true doctrine is, perhaps, summed up in few words by Professor Jowett, p. 486.

> "It is not by abstract theories of freedom, but by the careful observation of circumstances, that we can in any degree control them; in other words, *true freedom can only exist by a rational belief in necessity*. We must limit ourselves, for we are finite creatures."

Later, in the same essay, he writes:—

> "A religious mind feels the difference of saying—God chose me, I cannot tell why, not for any good that I have done, and I am persuaded that he will keep me unto the end:—and saying—God chooses men quite irrespective of their actions, and predestines them to eternal salvation:—and yet more, if we add the other half of the doctrine,—God refuses men quite irrespective of their actions, and they become reprobates predestined to everlasting damnation. *The first is the expression of Christian hope; the latter of a religious philosophy which has ceased to talk by faith.* The first is the temper of St. Paul and of Scripture; the latter the spirit of some Calvinist theologians."—p. 500.

We wish we could give the reader any idea of the noble essay on Natural Religion. We had marked many passages for extraction; but it fills forty closely-printed pages, and we should become insatiable of quotation. A second edition is in preparation; we hope that few who desire will be unable to peruse it. And we of necessity approach the only irksome part of our duty, as to which we are made diffident by our very high appreciation alike of Professor Jowett's moral and spiritual qualities, as of his powerful intellect and comprehensive knowledge. Still, where we are distinctly conscious of moral repugnances and moral alarm, it seems to be our duty to give some expression in this direction. We refer to the essay on Casuistry.

This is naturally divisible into two parts, as the following passage may explain:—

> "So far we seem to arrive at a general conclusion like St. Paul's,—Whether ye eat or drink, do all to the glory of God. Have the spirit of truth,

and the truth shall make you free, and the entanglements of words and the perplexities of action shall disappear. But there is another way in which such difficulties have been resolved, which meets them *in detail;* viz., the practice of Confession, and the rules of casuistry which are the guide of confessors. When the spirit is disordered within us, it may be urged that we ought to go out of ourselves and confess our sin to another. But he who leads, and he who is led, alike require some *rules* for the examination of conscience, to quicken or moderate the sense of sin, to assist experience, to show men to themselves as they really are, neither better nor worse. Hence the necessity for casuistry."—p. 350.

All that follows is devoted to an analytical history—very acute, clear, and instructive,—of casuistry, as practised in the school of the Jesuits. Professor Jowett's object is to expound and expose the vicious system of meeting conscientious difficulties by formal and authoritative rules. He intends to be an advocate of true and spiritual freedom against what in theory is a rigid enforcement of morals, but in fact an arbitrary licence to sin and crime. The first part of the essay sets forth the method of St. Paul, and seeks to apply it to modern life; the second part virtually denounces a system, which, though a "byword among mankind for hypocrisy and dishonesty," is not the less fostered by Ultramontane Romanism and by certain sections of the Puseyites. So far, in a broad view, we must heartily approve of his essay; but when we consider in detail what he says and what he suggests, in the early and positive half of it, we are constrained to pause, to question, and to remonstrate.

Transferring the apostle's precepts into modern life, Professor Jowett shows how we may be, as it were, forced out of the world by an extravagant fear of being contaminated by evil: as, because slavery is wrong, a man scruples to buy the produce of slavery, or a manufacture into which slave-produce has entered, "and so on without end." Or if I may not practise a trade deleterious to the health or morals of those engaged in it, it is inferred that neither may I let a house to another so engaged.

"Numberless questions of the same kind relating to the profession of an advocate, a soldier, or a clergyman, have been pursued into endless consequences. In all these cases there is a point at which *necessity* comes in and compels us to adopt the rule of the Apostle, which may be paraphrased, *Do as other men do in a Christian country.* Conscience may say: He who is guilty of the least, is guilty of all. In the apostle's language, it then becomes 'the strength of sin,' encouraging us to despair of all, because in that mixed condition of life in which God has placed us we cannot fulfil all."—p. 342.

"Quite independently of real sorrow for sin, most religious persons in the course of their lives have felt unreal scruples or difficulties. . . . Honour or truth seem to be at stake about *trifles light as air*, or conscience has become a burden too heavy for them to bear in some doubtful matter of conduct. . .

There are few greater dangers in religion than the indulgence of such scruples. . . . . . . *A tender conscience is a conscience unequal to the struggles of life.* . . . . . . In our moral, as in our physical nature, we are finite beings, capable only of a certain degree of tension ever liable to suffer disorder or derangement. . . . . . . No one can fix his mind intently on a trifling scruple, or *become absorbed in an eccentric fancy*, without finding the great principles of truth and justice depart from him. . . . .”—p. 346.

“In daily life cases often occur, where *we must do as other men do*, . . . even though unable to reconcile a particular pratice with the letter of truthfulness, or *even* to our individual conscience. It is hard in such case to lay down a definite rule. But *in general we should be suspicious of any conscientious scruple in which other good men do not share.*”—p. 349.*

It is with fear that we touch at all so entangled a subject, lest it become necessary to treat it too minutely. That there is such a thing as a morbid conscience, and that Professor Jowett does not overrate its mischief, we perfectly allow; but our first regret is, that he does not sharply distinguish the questions: “Is my scruple needless and overstrained?” and: “Ought I to abandon practices which, after allowing the argument from authority to exert its full influence, I cannot reconcile with moral right?” He appears to us to invest that argument with such extravagant and pernicious importance, as virtually supersedes individual conscience entirely. To be morbidly tender in scruples is the weakness of barely a small fraction of mankind, yet he treats it as a prevalent danger. “To go with the multitude to do evil,” is precisely the sin to which we are all prone, even the best of us: yet he accounts it as rather a mark of strength of mind to “brush away scruples.” Rightly to proportion the parts of duty; to esteem the near as more urgent than the distant; to elevate the moral and make light of the merely ceremonial; to distinguish when a trifling observance *is* a mere trifle, and when it assumes moral importance, is necessary for healthy judgment and right conduct. But to confound, under the phrase of “scruples,” questions so unlike as, on the one hand, the observance of new moons and sabbaths, the eating of various meats, and, on the other, the hiring oneself to the trade of a soldier or advocate, or having “doubts concerning orders” (pp. 344, 347, 348) appears to us highly adverse to the interests of truth and sound conscience. This whole argument ignores the idea of martyrdom as having any possible claim on us moderns: nor do we see how, according to his principles, there could ever have been martyrs in any time, except among the weak-minded and morbidly scrupulous.

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* The italics are ours.

Neither could there have been conversions to a new religion; but men would have gone on conforming for ever to old superstitions, if the arguments which he pleads had been allowed to bear sway.

We have read, in one of the religious periodicals of the day, extracts from a work on casuistry, officially recommended by a Roman bishop, in which it is laid down that a vendor of milk who dilutes the beverage *only* as much as he is forced by the necessities of his trade and the competition of rivals, ought to make his conscience easy, and (may we add ?) "brush away his scruples." Professor Jowett's acuteness will perhaps be able to show why such a case is not included in his rule,—Do as men do in a Christian country; but we are apprehensive that very few of his readers will be acute enough to find the distinction; or rather, we feel sure that it cannot be expected of one practically subject to the temptation. If the final consideration—"Supposing I leave my profession, *how am I to live?*"—is to have as much weight as Professor Jowett gives it (p. 348) with an incipient soldier, barrister, or clergyman, all must calculate that it will be equally weighty with the milkman or grocer. Do as men do in a Christian country! Comfortable doctrine to those "strong-minded" enough to accept it, in numberless evil trades certainly not contemplated by its propounder. It is related of the Rev. John Newton, the friend of the poet Cowper, that while engaged in the slave trade he was driven to the devoutest religious exercises, in order to counteract the carnal temptations incident to the having so many young black females in his absolute power; and that at that time he regarded the trade as a disagreeable, but certainly an honest means of earning a livelihood. England is, in Professor Jowett's view, a "Christian country;" but surely so she was also a century and two centuries ago. If the phrase is to bear any moral influence now, it had an equal right to sway men's judgment then. If to live by hiring out one's tongue to plead either side of a cause, or one's sword for uncertain work, at the bidding of we know not who, nor on what principles, is now practised and defended in a Christian country, and by men so amiable and respectable that we feel ashamed to refuse them the title "good," the same has been true at other times and places, even under Christianity, of many practices which we have generally learned to disapprove.

When the thought flashes across a man's conscience,—"The cause which they are paying me to plead is a scandalous one; the war to which I have hired myself to fight is unjust and hateful;

how can I kill human beings without solemn judgment and sacred verdict?"—such a thought (let us grant to Professor Jowett) may be the morbid scruple of a weak mind; but it can never be justly quelled or brushed away by the topic, that Christendom at large is unscrupulous. We add, it is distressing to find such phrases as "trifles light as air"—"unreal" objections—used in connexion, on the one side, no doubt, with scruples unsubstantial enough, but, on the other, with oblique reference to difficulties of no less magnitude than the piercing question, "Am I becoming the hired despoiler of families? Am I selling myself to secret, unknown, and probably unscrupulous cabinets, to become their tool of murder? Am I professing to preach truth in God's name and by his inward inspiration, but really binding myself to uphold articles of religion which I do not believe, and which I ought publicly to renounce? How can I nourish professional falsehood, and yet be a successful minister of truth?" Surely an infinite chasm separates *such* scruples from those of new moons, sabbaths, and unclean meats. No analogy at all unites them. Nay, and a grave, painful thought here presses us hard. What earnest Christian but sighs and groans over Christendom? One school flatly denies that *countries* are Christian at all, and says that only an elect remnant deserves the name. We will not enter that controversy. But, whatever theory be adopted, a heart wise and tender like Professor Jowett's must sometimes be ready to burst with grief at the established vices and atrocities of Christian countries and nations; and what else, we ask, maintains these and makes them possible, except that the individual agents in each case cast the responsibility off themselves on to the system? And, on the contrary, what has ever led to the overthrow of established iniquities, except the acting on precisely the opposite principle from that to which Professor Jowett lends his great influence? When an old Roman Christian declined to conform to the laws of the land and the practice of loyal subjects, by casting a little incense into the censer which burnt before the emperor's image, undoubtedly his friends told him that his scruple was "light as air." We all know what it means (they would say); none of us really think emperors, living or dead, to be gods; it means only that we are loyal. To refuse obedience will be interpreted to mean *more* than you desire. We admit it is a pity that the emperor exacts this form of observance. We look on this as an evil; but, we pray you, *be not insensible* [we use Professor Jowett's words] *to the great truth, that though we may not do evil that good may come, yet good and evil, truth and falsehood, are bound* *together on earth, and we cannot separate ourselves from them* (p. 348). If such topics had availed with the early Christians, no martyrdoms would have been requisite, and Christendom of every age has been absurd and pernicious in her admiration of the martyr-spirit. Professor Jowett, we anticipate, would candidly reply, that that spirit has been *too much and too indiscriminately* admired; and if he said this, we should agree with him. Yet we cannot resign the conviction, that where the martyr-spirit is extinguished, no new and quickening morality will ever rise in a nation. On the contrary, they will ever gravitate more and more towards materialism, the love of "substantial" comfort carrying the day in each successive conflict.

Society does not like to be disturbed in its routine; men in authority are affronted if their orders are criticised by inferiors. It needed perhaps some eccentricity of mind, before an English officer at Malta objected to saluting the host at military bidding, or in India to escort the pilgrims, or pay the dancing-women at the temple of Jaganaut. It is but a little while since it would have been judged impertinent and absurd in a Chancellor of the Exchequer to object to raising money by lotteries. In short, we know not what moral evil which has once struck root into an established system could be shaken off otherwise than by foreign conquest,* if each individual in turn submits his conscience to that which has grown up in the society. The first objectors are often ill-informed or extravagant, as the old Lollards and Wickliffe may seem to be; yet they are not useless; it is something to have protested; it stimulates the conscience of society, and prepares it for improvement. Nor is he always useless who, by throwing himself out of a profession, cuts himself off from many means of improvement and sources of wisdom, and seems to the eye of sense to be a puling, foolish, lost man. Take the case of the poet Cowper, who for forty years at least might naturally have seemed a lamentable instance of morbid feeling superinducing inaction and insanity; yet few will now doubt that he did more good to mankind by the moral effect of his poems than any dozen of able barristers have done by all the private lawsuits by which they have been enriched.

And what, after all, is that "walking by faith," of which Professor Jowett knows how to write so well, if it be not the resolute doing, or refusing to do, that which we see to be right or wrong, without calculating how it is to affect the rest of our lives? Conscience goes on with us, as a lantern in a dark night, showing sometimes but one step before us, yet that one we take. If in consequence we become poorer in pocket, yet we are richer in faith, and better fitted to become lights of the world morally, than if we attained greater accomplishment of mind at the expense of damage to our conscience. Professor Jowett speaks of the tenderly conscientious as "absorbed in an eccentric fancy," and weakened by over-tension. Tension there must be, perhaps over-tension, for one who has day by day to fight hard against wickedness in high places, as (we will say) a GARRISON contending against slavery in the United States. If such a man suffers some overstraining, some distortion of mind, it is only as a warrior may suffer in body from a terrible and honourable conflict. But in a majority of cases we think the "tension" and the "absorption" are fictitious. Somebody will not allow his servant to say "My master is not at home," when he is at home; he will not sign himself "your obedient humble servant" to one to whom he owes no service; or perhaps he will not eat slave sugar knowingly; these things may be trifles, but what tension and exhaustion of mind follows, we do not see. Or again, a young man's father wanted him to go into the army, his mother into the Church, but his tutor advised the bar; from scruples which Professor Jowett judges weak he refused them all. While they pressed him hard, he perhaps had struggle and tension; but from the day that his course is fixed, all occasion and possibility of this seems to vanish. Surely moral strength is earned by every sacrifice made to conscience, earned precisely by such struggles, even when ignorance and mistake mingle in our acts; nor was it by asking "How they were to live," that either Socrates, or Paul, or another who shall be nameless, or any of those of whom the world was not worthy, wrought righteousness and out of weakness were made strong.

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* Is it not precisely *because* the old religions superseded private by public conscience, that conquest was the only mode by which established vices could be exterminated?

In fine, we desire to replace Professor Jowett's practical doctrine on this head by another widely different. "Condemn your own self by the highest law which your conscience discerns, but condemn all others by the current morality of the society to which they fitly belong." We must not call our neighbours to the bar of our private perceptions; but unless we would quench within us the diviner spirit, we must cherish and obey it ourselves; and this we hold to be a truer exposition of Paul's benign and genial doctrine than the over-accommodating one which we regret to have had to combat.

MORAL INFLUENCE OF LAW.

[1860.]

IT is a notorious fact of ancient and modern times, that very many politicians who have no belief in religion have upheld religious creeds as conducive to the national morality; and they have generally much to say that is plausible in their defence. Side by side with this, it has been maintained, upon a large survey of the world, that national morality depends very little on the avowed creed of nations; and it may be worth while to dwell for a moment on the evidence of this fact. I will begin by contrasting the Turks with the Persians. According to the testimony of a series of impartial Englishmen who have known them well, the peasants of Turkey proper are eminently upright, truthful, simple-hearted, honest, friendly; faithful and devoted in domestic relations,—the tie of parent and child being peculiarly tender and beautiful. The Persians, on the contrary, are described as prevailingly frivolous, false, cheating, and generally without conscience. Both nations are Mohammedan. It is true, that they are of different sects. The Persians regard the three first Caliphs as usurpers, and reject the "traditions of the elders" concerning the miracles of Mohammed and various observances. But none of us will for a moment impute the superiority of Turkish morality to this ceremonial difference. It undoubtedly rises out of the social organization, local influences, and mode of life, which have come down from remote times. We have a confirmation of this in the fact, that all which is best in the Turkish character is apt to be lost as soon as the individual is transplanted, and especially if he be raised into high office. Yet his Mohammedan creed remains as orthodox as before. Here then we see, that though a right creed is of course better than a wrong creed, yet social institutions have more effect on our moral state than the national religion. And now look back to Europe. Are not Ireland, France, Spain, South Germany, and Italy, under the same church? Yet how diverse are they morally! If we had time to consider separate virtues and vices, the contrasts would perhaps seem deeper the longer we dwelt on them. What greater contrast in manliness can there be than that between Spain and Naples? It is conceded to be immense even between the border countries, Spain and Portugal. What Frenchman, however patriotic and Catholic, will dare to extol the French women for chastity? Yet, coming of the same race, and with very much of the same temperament, the Catholic Irishman justly boasts that the honour of Irish women stands as high as that of any in the whole world. Again, for long ages past, who would have seemed uncharitable in rating very low the truthfulness of the Italians or French? Yet no one would have dared so to speak of the Catholic Germans or of the Spaniards. Again, was not England once Catholic? Yet the England of Edward III. and that of Queen Elizabeth are not in any great moral contrast. I need not go farther. I have sufficiently indicated on what ground we are forced to believe that national morality does not depend chiefly on the theoretic religion, but on those social institutions, habits, and laws which pervade daily life.

The truth which I have been stating has been often darkly felt by those who avow as their motto, "Religion has nothing to do with politics." I believe these were accurately the words for which our late eminent statesman Mr. Canning encountered much obloquy some thirty-five years ago. In his mouth it meant, that an English Catholic, had more of the Englishman in him than of the Catholic, so that the difference between his religion and that of the Protestant ought to be overlooked in Parliament; a doctrine which shortly gained a great practical triumph. My main object in now addressing you, is to point out the false theory which is founded on this movement towards a more comprehensive State. Those who desired to admit Dissenters and Catholics into civil equality with Churchmen, who claimed that the State should turn a blind eye towards the creed of an individual, were sure to condemn any public hostility to voluntary religious institutions, and very generally may have wished that all such institutions should be left without national endowments. The State being thus, in their view, neutral towards the sects, they have naturally claimed that the sects should be neutral towards the State. They have conceived of Church and State (or, if you prefer so to phrase it, the Churches and the State) as occupying two parallel lines of movement which cannot come into collision: as though the Church were something of the other world alone; as though its business were with creeds and ceremonies, feasts and fastings, chanting and prayers, ordination and sacraments, consolation in sickness and hopes beyond the grave; but had no right to interfere with laws and customs which make men moral or immoral. To very many politicians of this class, to use religious influence against any measures of State is *primâ facie* evidence of an ambitious and meddling Church. On the other hand, they often avow, that in the State it is an erring obtrusiveness to legislate for the morality of the nation; and that all zeal for morality should be yielded up to individuals, or to voluntary societies.

If this were not a widely prevailing theory, influencing public men, often asserted in public journals, and espoused by those who have a name as political philosophers, I should not now address you on the other side. But since I regard this as the cardinal heresy of the Liberal party in both continents,—the heresy which, in proportion as it triumphs, demoralizes nations, and makes them vacillate between anarchy and despotism; the heresy which, by the reaction from it, gives a new life to bigotry, and generates dangerous forms of socialism,—I think the close examination of it is of urgent practical importance.

I began by pointing out the evidence lying on the surface of history, that the morality of nations is more dependent on laws and institutions than on religious creed. I think I should hardly overstate in saying, that laws, enactments, institutions of property, and the social relations which rise out of them (all of which are the sphere of the State), must of *necessity* affect the national character for good or evil: hence the action of the State is *essentially* either moral or immoral. But inasmuch as the Churches, or Church, either need not exist at all, or very often exist in a feeble, cloudy, ceremonial life, their action on the national morality is apt to be but a secondary force. Hence, instead of saying with the Ultra-voluntaryist, that morality is the sphere of the Church alone, it is more true to assert, that the State has necessarily a moral action, the Church only accidentally and occasionally. And if we admit that Religion rises above a solemn mummery or a wild fanaticism, only in proportion as morality underlies it; if we are conscious that Spiritualism is the glorification of the highest Morality, and that the immoral man cannot be permanently and consistently spiritual, nor ever reap the noblest fruits and blessed joys of spirituality; if we feel that an immoral atmosphere is corrupting to the most of us, and intensely painful to the best;—then never can those institutions and measures of State which make our neighbours and ourselves moral or immoral be matter of indifference to the spiritual man; nor can the religious unions, which we call Churches, ever wisely cherish neutral sentiment towards State policy. The noblest Churches, however strong and fresh the religious impetus within them, must necessarily be weakened, disorganized, and degraded, by prevailing public depravities. I will add, that when the spiritual influence within them becomes most intense, most pure, most beneficial, it will produce permanent results of good only in proportion as it affects public action or institutions.

It may aid to clear our view of this subject, if I present a slight sketch historically of the part which religious influence has played among nations. Civilization begins when brute force ceases to rule, and the warrior is subjected to the civilian. In China perhaps this was effected by the ascendency of mere moralists over the State, without any strictly religious development; but the result was, even more emphatically, that the State had the cognizance of morality, and became the moral teacher as well as enforcer. Everywhere else, in all the great civilized powers, we find religion to identify itself with civilianism, and to become so incorporated with the magistracy and laws, as to appear to dictate the whole constitution. In fact, it must have been a struggle between the men of the sword and the men of mind,—or between a ruling family on the one hand, and a combination of civilians and warriors on the other,—which resulted in a compromise, by which the sword ruled under sanction of religious law. But we have seldom any history of the earliest stage. One thing only I here assert and press,—that, as a fact, whether we approve it or not, whether we like it or not, in the whole earlier stage of humanity,—I mean down to the Christian era,—we know no instance in which a religion produced moral results, or any results but such as we must deplore, except in so far as it acted upon and through civil institutions; imparting to them solemnity and permanence, curbing alike despotism and anarchy, making law moral, and investing judicial sentences with power over the conscience. Out of this sprang, and always will spring, the greatness of nations, even when the theory of the religion is disfigured by antiquated fable and impure blots.

But the dispersion of the Jews, and the Christianity which followed, opened a new phase of human existence. A phenomenon came forth, known previously in the far East, but unparalleled in the West,—a religion appealing to individual conviction, and propagated by individual energy, through many countries, in spite of resistance and persecution from the civil power. As to certain broad facts concerning this great movement there can be no mistake. The Roman aristocracy, which conquered the Western world, had disorganized itself by plunder and by civil war, which ended in a military despotism, so complete within, and so uncontrolled without, as to become wildly immoral. During the monstrous rule of the three emperors, Caius Caligula, Claudius, and Nero, Christianity put forth its first and most signal efforts. The first churches looked out upon a civil power, which seemed to be made of iron and clay, without heart or conscience; a power as unsusceptible of Christian conversion as behemoth or leviathan. Sacrifice and incense, if offered only to Jupiter Best and Greatest, might perhaps have been interpreted as to the True Jehovah; but when incense to the images of the Cæsars, deceased and living, was the symbol of loyalty, and as it were the oath of office,—when persecution and death was inflicted on those who refused the test,—the Christian churches, from the time of Nero onward, not only despaired of such a civil power, but pictured it as a hideous and fierce beast, and impatiently expected its destruction by fire from heaven. To coalesce with it was "to worship the beast and his image," and involved an impious dereliction of the faith. The hostility thus kindled generated worse distrust, and before long, wider persecutions. Christ did not return in the clouds of heaven, at the time they expected him, to overthrow these incurable iniquities by flaming fire; but the despotism decayed by its own misrule, and the Goths from the Danube and the Black Sea began their terrible inroads. At last appeared a prince on the throne of the Cæsars who sought the alliance of the Christian churches, then already consolidated into a powerful organization. From that day the views, the policy, the aspiration of the Church was changed; and a second era began.

In this first era, which alone is regarded by many Protestants as the time of the Church's purity, will any one assert that the impurity of the State was no calamity to the Church? We cannot read the apostolic epistles without seeing what scandalous immoralities were liable to break out in those who were received as saints. The energy of Christian conviction to rescue men out of vice and crime was sometimes wonderful,—then, as in later ages; but to make deep spiritual impressions abiding is of all mental tasks the hardest. Habit is the ever-plodding tortoise which wins the race while the hare is asleep. Oh, how great the misery to a struggling human soul to have been reared in profligacy and recklessness of right! Moreover, he who seemed to be rescued from it by repentance and faith was not only open to the insidious re-approaches of old habit; he also of necessity worked and lived with old companions, was surrounded by reminiscences of his old offences, and by all the old solicitations. Where the public institutions favour vice and crime, and almost enforce it, how many of us will remain untainted? To touch pitch, and not be defiled; to walk through fire, and not be burned; to live in the midst of everything immoral, and maintain a conscience void of offence; to be subject to an unscrupulous and exacting superior, and behave to him with modesty and dutiful boldness, performing all his rightful commands, and refusing his unrightful,—is a task rather for an angel than for a man. Now let me ask: If we are truly religious men—I care not under what name,—if those whom I address are a religious church, what greater calamity from without could befal you *as* a religious body, *in* its religious hopes and aims, than if some evil demon could suddenly turn the civil institutions of our England into those of Nero's Rome? Oh, what a thing it is for our own moral and religious life to have no slavery among us! What a thing to have fixed law and fair juries, a police which cannot plunder and torture, magistrates who cannot arrest without cause, judges who cannot be terrified by power, soldiers who are restrained by civil law, and a law which is enforced equally upon all ranks! What a thing it is that impurity dares not to obtrude itself in full glare, usurping art, invading literature, penetrating into public religion, and dislocating family relations! Is it a fond fancy of Englishmen that it is characteristic of their nation to love fair play, to esteem truthfulness, to abhor hypocrisies and slanders, to uphold the rights of the weak, to disapprove all cruel extremes of punishment, all mere vindictiveness, all making of oneself judge in one's own cause? If in any of these things our boasts are justified, we owe these good qualities to the laws of the land. Let us not deceive ourselves. The best foundations of our moral character come to us as a gift from our predecessors, who have elaborated our civil institutions. Very imperfect we are; but the majority of us would be far worse if the laws of England were worse; and if we desire a purer and nobler morality to be wider spread and more permanent, we must desire and seek the removal of all those public regulations and customs which are experienced to be corrupting; we must aid every movement towards a purer condition of the whole social state.

But what did the Christian Church in her second age? Of course, her bishops, before often haughty and overbearing, became now, equally often, ambitious and worldly, bent on aggrandizing in wealth and power the religious community from which their greatness sprang. I have no thought at present to attack nor to palliate this conduct. But, measure their evil as you please, of their good we now reap the fruits; *precisely because* they fundamentally abandoned the original limitation of Christian effort, and embraced the institutions of this world in the sphere of the Church's action. To the apostles' eyes the saints were nothing but an elect remnant, snatched *out of* an evil world which was soon to be destroyed by fire. They laboured for to-day, not for a morrow which might never come. They tried to relieve the poor, but not to remove the causes of poverty; to rescue the vicious, but not to extirpate the social roots of vice; to comfort and teach the slave, but not to overthrow slavery; to defy evil law and wicked governors, but not to displace and replace them. Their whole action was upon individuals, not upon society: it was palliative, not radical; and hence its benefit was in many great countries of the world temporary only, and barely touched a fraction of the people. The Christian Church of the fourth century had built up its theoretic creed out of a mosaic of biblical texts, commented on in the spirit alternately of a Rabbinist and of a Neo-Platonist. But if on the side of the creed it manifested a weak understanding, yet in its ecclesiastical action it used the freest judgment, never tying itself down to the precedent or precepts of apostles who lived in a world differently circumstanced; but it undertook to remould the State, to infuse a new spirit into law, and claim the whole realm of the magistrate as the domain of the Church, that is, of Christ and of God. So long as the Church was morally higher than the State, the ambition of churchmen, however grasping and occasionally unscrupulous, was on the whole, of course, an immense benefit: and in that period of six or seven centuries, while barbarous invasion or riotous internal conflict tormented nearly all Europe, the Church in superadding her sanction to law and social institutions infused somewhat of broadly humane and moral aims. Those ecclesiastics assuredly made a great many mistakes, as fallible men will, and sowed much tare with their wheat. Judge their evil as severely as you choose, it will nevertheless remain true that we owe to them the moral reorganization of the State,—a basis on which fresh and fresh growths of good take place and shall take place.

We Protestants are too apt to think solely of the later stage of this history. We think of the Romish clergy as jealous of the cultivated laity, as animated by a narrow idolatry of church power, as claiming for churchmen an impunity of crime, crushing freedom among the clergy themselves, distorting or debauching society by monkery, nunnery, clerical celibacy, and auricular confession; in short, sacrificing moral ends to ecclesiastical glorification: finally, as convulsing Europe with war, and rending States with civil contention, in order to uphold a worn-out creed and the preposterous claims of a foreign priest. I name all this, lest, being unknown to many who hear me, I may seem to overlook, to doubt, or to defend it. I do not. But while I reprobate the *evil* ambition of Rome, and very much beside, I nevertheless defend, approve, and thank that *good* ambition, with which at an earlier time she made it a religious effort to improve the public institutions of barbarous Europe.

In the most far-going and active Protestantism the very same tendency appeared, as in Calvin, in Knox, in the Puritans. All of these regarded it as a first object of importance with the religious man to make the institutions of the State virtuous; and much permanent benefit, it is universally agreed, has remained from this to Scotland and to New England. The rock on which they all split is only too notorious. They identified *Virtue* with their own private creed, instead of interpreting it from the most highly developed conscience of men and nations. They tried to enforce what cannot be enforced, and limit what cannot be limited, measuring all minds by their own, as though they had the infallibility against which they rebelled. Reaction and indignation was sure to follow, from those reared in their own bosom. It began among us with the sects of the Independents and Quakers, and with the writings of Locke; it has been reinforced from the school of Bentham: and now, from hatred of Established Churches, and dread of Over-legislation and Communism, the error spreads wide, that the State *can* do *little*, and is not bound to do *any thing*, for moral improvements; and that the business of religious men, and religious communities as such, is not at all to act upon or through the public institutions.

But does any one seriously believe that the State can do little, or rather does not at present do much, for moral interests? What if it were to sanction polygamy? Must we go to the Mormons, or to the universally decaying Mohammedan powers, to ask the probable consequences? If it threw open the trade of gambling, betting-houses and lotteries, have the churches so much spare energy kept in reserve, that they could counteract the demoralizing influences which are now pent up? Indecent and corrupting exhibitions or gatherings, which evade the existing law, are at present believed to perpetrate much moral mischief in our great towns. And if you duly consider how willing a fraction of mankind is to enrich itself by acting the tempter and promoting vice, can any of you doubt how grave an addition to our existing vice would be caused, if every vile man were allowed by law to thrust upon our children such sights and sounds as more mature years know to poison the fountains of youthful peace, innocence, and love? In the year 1830, grave statesmen and economists talked learnedly on the efficacy of free-trade in beer to promote sobriety. Free beer-houses were established by the consent of both sides of Parliament; but in four years' time a select committee of the Commons, likewise composed of both sides of the House, judicially pronounced that a flood of vice had been set loose by the measure. Several select committees of both Houses have since declared themselves on the subject, always confirming this fact; yet it pleases the larger part of the press of England to shut its eyes, and pretend that the State can do nothing for morality. If time allowed, it would not be difficult to show, in numberless ways, how the action of public law is either a depraving or an improving influence. That we often are not aware of this, is a result, and in part a means, of its very efficacy. As a child has all its habits determined for it by the rules of the family, and moves in leading-strings unawares, so it is largely with the nation that has once become accustomed to the regulations of State. Habit is the great regulator of conduct, and hereby of morality. The atmosphere which we are ever breathing, without observing it, is the main source of health or of sickness.

But let me ask, how have the voluntary churches and solitary individuals in these later days rendered their good permanent to society? As far as I am aware, the earliest philanthropist of Protestant times was William Penn the Quaker. Of State-Churches he disapproved; but his celebrity for doing good on any large scale must surely rest on his public laws and institutions in Pennsylvania. In the next century John Howard, the visitor of prisons, was the most celebrated philanthropist. Of how little comparative avail would his career have been, if he had merely relieved the sufferings of individual prisoners! His real efficacy was through the political authorities, by stimulating them to improve the public regulations; and through this, he is a benefactor of Europe down to the present moment. So, again, the great religious movement of Wesley and Whitfield was not a mere reform in private life, but marked its moral success in public law, its effect on which is left permanently in regard to fairs, wakes, revels, and other public gatherings, once sources of demoralization, of which many are now suppressed, others are chastised. Once more, the greatness of Clarkson and Wilberforce as philanthropists does not rest on their charities in private life, but on the extinction of West-Indian slavery and the overthrow of public lotteries. The labours of the philanthropist seem always to find their legitimate goal in the amelioration of public institutions; for so only is the evil against which he is warring brought to its minimum. Bad institutions, acting on the less developed and imperfect minds, generate mischief far more rapidly than any argument of reason or of pure religion can check it. The further moral progress of mankind is to be looked for by regulations which hinder the corruption of the weak and ignorant by the cunning, the covetous, and the lustful. To make a trade of corruption is the highest of all offences against the social union. In proclaiming this, I utter no new political doctrine, but one ever avowed in England, and confirmed by many laws which are in daily active life. Yet the doctrine needs, I think, to be made more prominent to the conscience of the nation, and to be more pressed on the religious, as a clue to their own duties. In the last thirty or forty years we have become acquainted with that phrase, "the dangerous classes;" we have learnt that there is within our nation another nation, separated from it mentally, morally, religiously,—a nation of criminals often born from criminals, living chiefly on plunder,—barbarous in the midst of civilization. Many self-denying efforts have been systematically made by Ragged Schools and Town Missionaries to reach this population. If I were competent to measure, yet this is no place to measure, the amount of good thus effected, and how far it keeps pace with the progress of the evil. But to me it seems perfectly clear that the State has no right to expect the diseases of its body to be removed year after year by the zeal of private philanthropy; and that the rightful result of these efforts is, that those at whose sacrifice they are made should prevail with the public authorities to *prevent* the evils in an earlier stage. After it has been shown (and I think it has already been shown) what is the utmost which voluntary zeal can effect, it becomes clearer what the State must undertake. Two causes, it is notorious, chiefly, if not solely, generate "the dangerous classes"—*seduction of women*, and *the retail trade in intoxicating drink.* Hence it is clear in what direction the State has, *in the first instance*, to move, in order to counteract the evil.

Very few indeed of us can take up (what I may call) the profession of philanthropy; the rest of us are perhaps apt to think they fully do their part, if, having found some agency to which they can trust, they support it by one or more annual guineas. That is all well and right in itself; but if the agency is only palliative, if it aspire only to cure partially, not to prevent evil, something earlier remains to be done, and it must be done by the civil community itself.

This truth was discerned by the founder of one other philanthropic movement, which proved wholly abortive, through the enormous errors mingled with it; nevertheless its moral strength was derived from its firm grasp of a truth which the opposite schools were holding every day more loosely; the doctrine that *man cannot be perfected in isolation*; that his social union has a higher object than that of the market; that his virtue, feeble in the individual, becomes strong by mutual support; that in proportion as we are immature, our will is puerile, and we are the creatures of our circumstances; and that it is the proper business of the local civil community to promote the training of all to industry and to virtue. I allude to the late Robert Owen, of Lanark, the founder of English Socialism, a true philanthropist (I believe) in heart, though his public schemes were impossible, and his moral theories all ill-balanced, some of them monstrous. A part of his aims has been adopted by those who call themselves Christian Socialists, in whom it is easy to discern (side by side with very questionable opinions of another sort) a wholesome intensity of conviction that our nation is forgetting the duty of the State to use its vast power for moral good. Against us all, in every capacity, public or private, it is a fixed truth, that "Whosoever knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

If plunder and fightings, fires and murder, abounded in our streets, we should cry aloud and protest to our magistrates and rulers, imploring more vigorous measures. Let us hope that some higher motive than selfish fear would inspire the protest. But alas, when the evil threatens not ourselves, but those who are morally weaker than we, our outcry is far too tranquil. If the daughters or sisters of others are seduced, if the families of others are ruined by the public solicitations to drunkenness, we are apt to think it is no case for our complaint. Yet surely to shelter the weak in mind from excessive temptation is as much a duty of society as to rescue the weak in body from attack; and as to drunkenness, it is a duty which the State, for four centuries and upwards, has deliberately and avowedly assumed. Let no religious churches fancy that God has reserved for them corporately an isolated and peculiar goodness. They are in great measure products of their age and nation, and partake of its evil. They cannot be made perfect without the surrounding community. If there is what Frenchmen call a *solidarity* between nation and nation, each partaking of the other's good, each in some measure afflicted by the other's evil, so that each is in some sense responsible for all,—much more is this true of the natives of the same country, members of the same State, dwellers in the same locality, partners in daily transactions or company. If the law acts well for *our* moral good, because *we* are strong, but works ill to our neighbours because they are weak; — conduce as it may to the energy of the self-controlled, yet if it ensure a harvest of crime and debauchery under the windows of our happy homes, indeed it is a selfish and short-sighted principle in us to be contented and silent. England has long been heart-sick under a sense that religion has been unduly severed from the affairs of daily life. We long for a religion that shall be at once deep-hearted and practical. Whatever the professional politicians think or do not think, the nation at large is as weary of the personal questions which divide statesmen as of the theological quarrels on which sects are founded. The nation is very competent to discriminate repartee from wisdom, malicious speech from earnestness of heart: and out of the earnestness of its own heart has a natural right to claim that the moral welfare of the many shall never be sacrificed to the exchequer, nor to party. Nay, I will add,—this is conceded and avowed on both sides by those who declare themselves to be party-men. Hence, without a struggle to dislocate existing entanglements, the moral earnestness of the religious unions of this nation, when it joins in one prayer, has forthwith a great, a mighty force with Parliament and with the Throne. The claim rising from us all, that the authorities, central and local, armed by the law, shall put down public solicitations to corruption, and shall thereby help us and those weaker than some of us to avoid ruinous vice, will never be mistaken for ecclesiastical ambition or democratic disaffection. There is therefore a real and great power resting in the churches, just in proportion to their moral simplicity and earnestness,—a power which they cannot innocently disuse. All that is needful is, that they shall speak from the *heart* of all good men, not from their own private *heads*, and plead with the organs of the State for that virtue on which we all agree, not for that theology on which we so deeply differ. This is reasonable; for the State belongs to us in common, and no man or sect may claim to work it for private ends. This also is on the side of spiritual advancement; for the higher the morality of the nation, the better material it affords for a truly spiritual church. Oh, what a day, worth living for and worth dying for, that would be, in which all the good and pure-hearted should coöperate to abate every palpable immorality of the land! The common action would teach them a common esteem. Their unwise animosities would drop off. Cultivating simplicity of eye, they would find their whole souls full of light; and without proselytisms, controversies, or heart-burnings, a new and real reformation would be begun.

DR. LUSHINGTON'S JUDGMENT AND FEASIBLE CHURCH REFORM.

[1862.]

THE word Theocracy is used with some latitude and uncertainty by European historians. But if we analyze its prevalent applications, we may find that an institution receives this name when its upholders assume it to have a divine sanction which shields it from human criticism, and indeed brands that criticism as an impiety. Such institutions carry on their face a prohibition of gradual improvement by successive reforms; and therefore, unless they simultaneously assert for themselves an infallibility and a supernatural origin, are really *self*-condemned. The Turkish Dominion professes to rest on the Koran: and, difficult as it may be to find the first link between that particular dynasty and the sacred book, nevertheless the constant reference to its authority for the principles of political right sustains the sincere belief that the empire rests on irrefragable divine authority. The Papacy, also, which pertinaciously maintains itself to be a divine growth out of a divine root, a building raised without hands by the work of the same Spirit which after laying the apostolic foundation never since failed in energy, can plausibly maintain (however false in the eye of an historian are the details asserted), that no human science or statesmanship may legitimately revise and reform the creed or the practices of the Church. But the Anglican Church —whether through the tyrannical recklessness of princes and statesmen or through the bigoted folly of theologians—has grasped at a Theocratic sceptre by mere imitation of its predecessors, after deliberately renouncing all the pretensions by which alone such assumption can be defended from the most offensive imputations: and, while claiming for priests and bishops spiritual powers of vague but mighty mystery, subjects those priests and bishops to a degrading yoke, nay, puts them as it were into the felon's dock, if they dare to use their reason on divine things and on the Scriptures as freely as did Cranmer, Hooper, Latimer—all, in short, who broke loose from Popery to establish the Anglican Church.

The pernicious and odious slavery to which the bishops and clergy are subjected by the LAITY, *who put no such fetters on themselves*, is a phenomenon to which no "High Churchman" has a right to shut his eyes. It is usual with them, we are aware, to say as little as possible about the Act of Uniformity, and try to represent the existing laws of the Church to have been made by the bishops and clergy, because the assent of Convocation was given to them. It suffices to reply, that as all individual clergymen were ejected who refused assent, so would their representatives in Convocation have been ejected had they refused. But let us waive this point for a moment. We do not deny that the legislature which enacted the existing system, followed the authority of certain episcopalian divines freshly restored to dignity. Suppose for a moment that the legal sanction had come from these divines, and not from the lay-parliament which freely chose to enact their opinions. Are then the bishops and deans restored by Charles II. ostensibly wiser and better men, higher in spiritual knowledge and authority, than the existing dignitaries of the Church? Will any one of these who recently attacked the Essayists and Reviewers—will the Bishop of Salisbury, of Exeter, or of Oxford—so trample down his own episcopal dignity as to say: "I have indeed received from the Most High power to bind and to loose, power to bestow the Spirit of God by the laying on of my hands. I can lift up my face to heaven, and say boldly to a young man in presence of the congregation—*Receive thou the Holy Ghost. Whose sins thou remittest, they are remitted; and whose sins thou retainest, they are retained*. But while I am invested with this efficacious power, bestowed originally by Christ on his Apostles, whereby I exercise apostolic functions, yet I am not on the same spiritual eminence as the co-exiles of Charles II. *They* were free to study what is true: *I* have only to ask, what they and their fellows have bid to be enacted. *They* were free to try doctrine by the test of its agreement with the Scripture, with the consent of wise and holy men, with facts of human nature and of science, with the dictates of individual conscience and common sense. They *did* so compare and so test the alleged doctrines of the Romanist and of the Puritan churches. By this process they made for me an authoritative system, which I am not permitted to criticize, but am bound humbly to believe." If a prelate remarkable for strength of mind were thus to speak—for instance, the Bishop of Exeter or of St. David's—it would be simply impossible for the public to believe his sincerity. What indeed can be meant by this mighty and awful power of bestowing the Holy Spirit? We have no right to insult the bishops by implying that they do not believe themselves to possess it, or that they degrade the profoundest and noblest of Christian thoughts—that in-dwelling of God in the conscience of man which is called God's Spirit in the heart — into some material virus communicable by outward touch. We take for granted that they must believe the priest who has power to remit or retain sin to have a peculiar and divine insight as to *what is* sin; and that the bishop who knows that a candidate is the right man to invest with this power abides in a still closer consciousness of the mind and judgments of God. If any one who believes himself invested with it be made somewhat overbearing, that does not seem to deserve wonder: but if at the same time he believe it to be fit, decent, or rather, not very indecent and absurd, for others to dictate to him by law what doctrines are true, what false, and forbid to him even the liberty exercised by his predecessors at the times of the successive reforms,—this would seem to be a moral portent.

Nearly all the outcry which has been made (we do not say unnaturally or unjustly) against the Essayists and Reviewers, goes upon the current doctrines of Christian divines (which we are sure the bishops will not disown), that Unbelief is Sin. We are then at liberty to suppose that Professor Jowett or Dr. Rowland Williams, on becoming painfully conscious of some unbelief—unbelief, perhaps, in the genuineness of the book of Daniel, or of the soundness of the received doctrine of the Atonement—had followed the prescribed rules of the Church in order to relieve his conscience. We may, without offence, suppose him to have sought a private interview with Bishop Thirlwall, who has assuredly very often made the public invitation, "If any man be distressed in conscience, . . . let him come unto me, or to some other discreet and worthy minister of God's word," &c. Imagine Dr. Williams to confess to his Ordinary his soreness of conscience under the painful doubt whether the Propitiation wrought by Christ consisted in *reconciling His Father to us by his own bloodshedding*, and to ask of him absolution for the sin, *if* it be a sin. In more ways than one this would put the bishop into an unpleasant dilemma: we shall dwell on but a small part of the case. It must be inferred confidently, from the recent facts, that he would pronounce such unbelief, if obstinately persisted in, to be a great and dreadful sin; but would be willing to administer absolution for it, if the sin were cordially renounced. Yet so to deal with the case is a very different thing from saying with Dr. Lushington, "You are bound by Act of Parliament to believe the common doctrines, and you must not assume the layman's right of private judgment." He who is warranted, in the name of the Most High, to pronounce an opinion to be a sin, and to absolve the sin when the sinner recants, has not merely an insight into divine truth wholly independent of the Anglican enactments (for that, it is hoped, we all may have) but has a right to speak with divine authority on the question, what opinions are sin, and what are not. And yet, bishops with even greater pretensions, and priests who have received from them a strictly divine power, are to be put in bondage to a Parliament of Charles II.! What is this, but coarsely to treat their prerogatives as a convenient but empty hypocrisy?

We are aware that there is a theory held by some amiable and eccentric clergymen, that *Subscription is no Bondage.* A pamphlet with this title, some years back, was not welcomed by the High Church as containing a true and noble thought, but on the contrary brought on the author the rough sarcasm of being ready to subscribe anything without feeling bound to believe it. But if any one can seriously hold subscription to be no bondage, the recent criminal prosecutions for ever put an end to such a notion. Dr. Lushington indeed often reminds us that he is bound in every case of doubt to give the benefit to the accused party (to the very great advantage of the accused), because the charge is that of *crime.* While the Bishop of St. David's was yet a layman, he felt free to translate the treatise of a pious, learned, and highly-esteemed German clergyman on the Gospel of St. Luke. As a bishop, if he still felt free to do the same thing, he might be roughly convinced of his error by being brought up as a *criminal* to be tried by one or more lay-judges. We are therefore safe in saying, that he knows Subscription to be Bondage.

It not only is so, but is meant to be so. Where all upright and sound-minded men agree, as on the rudiments of moral duty, a creed might be constructed which all would avow without bondage; but for that very reason, there would be no motive for exacting subscription to it. The creeds enforced by law are popularly and most accurately termed *test*-articles. Because it is and was notorious, that very many thoughtful, good, and pious men do *not* believe them; for this very reason they are imposed, in order to exclude all such men. If all believed the ecclesiastical Trinity, there could be no motive for imposing the Athanasian Creed and the other Trinitarian portions of the formularies; but the clergy are tied down to the belief. While a prisoner makes no effort to go beyond the length of his chain, he may manage to convince himself that he wears no chain at all. But when he sees one of his fellow-captives violently pulled back in the indiscreet attempt to go too far, it is more like a maniac than a wise man to hug himself in the fancy, that, because he chooses to submit without a struggle, he is not himself equally in chains. It is remarkable that Dr. Lushington adduces a clause of the Athanasian Creed as condemnatory of Mr. Wilson, not on the matter of the Trinity (as to which doctrine ingenious philosophers know how to riot in Platonic freedom), but on the ruthless belief in everlasting punishment. On other doctrines of the Church the learned judge finds great difficulty in condemning the accused; that is to say, in a criminal trial he is bound to admit great latitude, and he finds their philosophical phraseology very hard to understand. But nothing can be clearer than the doctrine of eternal punishment in the Creed; and here the judge peremptorily forbids a clergyman to extend his charity beyond what is written. If the judge himself do not keep the faith whole and undefiled, as expounded in that creed, the clergyman is bound to believe that the judge will, without doubt, perish everlastingly.

The bondage of the clergy is nowhere so remarkable as in the Universities, because these are intended to be schools of theological learning. The Church has been used to glory over the Dissenters, as though she alone had a *learned* clergy. It is true that the Academical Degree does not at all secure this: it does but give a *gentlemanly* order of clergy. Nevertheless, the apparatus of Theological Professors, the study of Ecclesiastical History, Evidences of Christianity, Scientific Exposition, in an atmosphere highly charged with intellectual activity and its subtlest forces, combine to invite the academic theologian to dangerous inquiries. Even if his mind be ever so little active, yet if it have mere receptivity, to study the history of the past, or closely examine the original Scriptures, gravely expose him to become too wise for his subscriptions. Of what use is it to become learned? An ecclesiastical judge may reply, *ex-officio*, "In order to defend the legally enacted system." But man was created to follow God's truth, not to prostitute his intellect to the mere upholding of an enactment passed in a year of vengeance by zealots drunk with royalism. No man with any particle of spirit—no man with any breath of divine aspiration—no one ever likely to confer lustre on his church, will endure to confess to himself so mean and base an object of study. Academic theologians of any consideration are of course animated to their labours by a thirst for truth. They see by their sides other ardent minds—a chemist, an astronomer, a geologist, a historian, a Greek critic—each in his own sphere, developing not only truths of greater or smaller beauty, but, what is much more, the laws and conditions for the attainment of truth. Nothing can convince them that while it is possible now to attain clearer knowledge of Greek history and of the remains of Greek literature than was possessed by scholars two centuries back, it is nevertheless impossible to improve upon their knowledge of Ecclesiastical History, and of the fragmentary literature called Old and New Testament. And, with all deference to the learning of the eminent judge before whom two of the recent trials have come, we still must assert that his estimate of the relations of history to theology is very deficient. In commenting on the seventh Article against Mr. Wilson, he avows that he can find no repugnance to the Articles and Formularies in denying that "Jesus revealed his religion as *a historical faith*." From a lawyer this may be intelligible; but in his judgment concerning Dr. Williams, who (as alleged in Article XIII.) had used historical reasoning to disprove the Church-doctrines of baptismal regeneration and original sin, Dr. Lushington goes farther: "I am of opinion that the passage is essentially historical, and cannot be truly construed as a maintaining of doctrine." Yet it is notorious that in a historical faith (and such is *Church* Christianity) no confutation of a doctrine can be more decisive than by showing its recency and its origin. The passage from Dr. Rowland Williams which was impugned is thus quoted by the judge:—

> "The first Christians held that the heart was purified by Faith: the accompanying symbol, Water, became by degrees the instrument of purification. Holy Baptism was at first preceded by a vow, in which the young soldier expressed his consciousness of spiritual truth; but when it became twisted into false analogy with circumcision, the rite degenerated into a magical form, and the Augustinian notion of a curse inherited by infants was developed in connexion with it."

No better example is needed to illustrate the folly and the cruelty of establishing a school of learned theology and expecting those who study in it to keep their belief conformable to a standard of faith enacted 200 years ago. It is impossible to read ungarbled Ecclesiastical History without discovering Infant Baptism to be a rite long posterior to the Apostles. Augustin himself, though son of a pious Christian mother, was not baptized until full manhood. His success in his controversy with Pelagius established in the church the theory of blood-pollution inherited from Adam, and of infant baptism as its necessary cure. No student can arrive at a conviction that these are facts of history without seeing that the whole basis of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration is overturned, and that the Church Service on this rite is (what Dr. Williams indirectly calls it) a magical superstition. To forbid historical studies, to put into an *Index Expurgatorius* the works of Neander and Gfroerer, would in some sense be a mercy to Oxford and Cambridge divines; but actively to encourage such studies, while dictating to what conclusions they shall lead, is a cruelty and an indecency. We cannot be blinded—and we are sure that English statesmen are not blinded—by the arbitrary and false assertion, that it is beyond the powers of the human mind to examine the evidence and the origin of this and all the other ecclesiastical dogmas. One and all, their historical development is on the surface of history. Gibbon has made widely known the assertion of Petavius, that all the pre-Nicene Fathers are heretical on the doctrine of the Trinity. To assert or to deny the fact does not now concern us: it suffices to insist that the inquiry what doctrine was taught on this subject by Justin Martyr, by Hippolytus, by Irenæus, by Origen, by Cyprian, by Athanasius, is as strictly historical and human, and not at all more difficult, than the inquiry what Anaxagoras, Plato and Aristotle taught; and for an English Parliament to enact to what results the historian shall come, would in both cases be equally absurd, in the former far more pernicious. For if any one, on inquiry, find the assertion of Petavius to be true; if he find that the Ecclesiastical Trinity is a doctrine gradually built up in five or six centuries; that the last creed is falsely called Athanasius's, and is nothing but a Latin creed; that it has a clause violently offensive to the Greek Church; that the Nicene Creed has been garbled into partial and apparent conformity to it: it is no longer possible for him to give assent and consent, *ex animo*, to the Anglican doctrines. The whole weight of the so-called Christian Evidences (which are assumed to outweigh "conscience and devout reason") depends on the traditional descent of the doctrines from the Apostles and from Christ. If historical testimony cut the links of this tradition, the doctrine which is shown to have a later origin falls to the ground. It is then nothing short of tyrannical to found institutions for ecclesiastical study, and then punish the students as criminals, ejecting them from their positions, their connexion, and their honourably earned emoluments, if their conclusions militate against the prejudgments of the Legislature. The injustice and folly are the more remarkable, because the same men who are zealous against the least relaxation of legislative dogmatism, also treat it as a sin if any one, as Dr. R. Williams, deny the religion of Jesus to be a historical faith. Yet if it be such, in whole or in part, it is in the same proportion amenable to disproof from the facts of history. The Legislature would be ashamed of itself if it were surprised into an enactment which dictated to a chemical or astronomical professor, or to a Greek historian, to what conclusions he shall arrive; yet it is *not* ashamed of having so acted towards ecclesiastical historians and students of sacred literature.

The considerations which we have hitherto pressed do not at all supersede an opposite inquiry—whether the clerical authors of the "Essays and Reviews" are justifiable in the court of conscience for retaining their position as clergymen, when aware that their convictions deviate so widely from the established system. We must not refuse to express ourselves on this subject, but fear that we cannot do it concisely; so many are the topics of excuse, as well as grounds of censure, special perhaps to each essayist. And, first of all, we must urge against every *other* clergyman the salutary words: "*He that is without sin* among you, let him first throw the stone." Do the Evangelical clergy sincerely believe the Baptismal Service and certain passages in the Catechism? How many of the High or Broad Church, or indeed of any name, accept the Article on Predestination and Election to Life? How many believe (what the Articles pointedly declare) that Christ carried with him into heaven his *flesh and bones?* The Apostles' Creed, so often solemnly recited, is not satisfied with the simple statement, Christ died and was buried; but superadds in the next clause, He descended into hell. What is meant by Hell which is not included in Death and Burial, and requires a descent? History answers assuredly, that those who formed the Creed believed in a "Limbo," where "Christ preached to the spirits in prison, who aforetime were disobedient," &c. How many of the clergy believe this, or believe anything at all about the Limbo? Yet they may read of it in the canonical epistles of Peter and Jude, and may get curious illustrations from the book of Enoch. We do not at all say that clergymen in general offend against their subscriptions to the extent in which some at least of the Essayists offend. But we do say that the Church Formularies to which all subscribe are inherently incongruous, and such as no one mind can believe. The fact is dimly avowed by many of the panegyrists of the Church, who boast of its many-sidedness and latitude. Notoriously it was in many respects a compromise, and retains copious fragments of great antiquity worked into a conglomerate with many more novel views: Augustinianism, proceeding from Luther and Calvin, has been partially adopted and combined with very different schools of Christianity. Nothing short of a miracle could give real unity and self-consistency to a system brought forth by political and theological struggle. A peer of the last century publicly taunted the Church with having Calvinistic Articles, an Arminian clergy, and a Papal Liturgy. We by no means adopt his epigram as an absolute truth, yet it contains too much truth to be despised. The Articles on Predestination and kindred topics could never have been the product of the same mind as the Baptismal Service and Catechism; and it is notorious that one or other side of the dilemma is sure to be distressing to every clergyman. Of the Homilies we have said nothing; but Dr. Lushington avows them to be a "standard of doctrine" for clergymen. One thing is certain, that they are extremely disliked by the High Church, if ever opened by them. A large part of the clergy manage to remain on good terms with their own consciences by shutting their eyes to a sensible fraction of that which they have subscribed. We sincerely pity their position, and while they assume merely a defensive tone, we have no thought of severity. But when they assume to condemn their fellow clergymen (perhaps abler and nobler souls than they), they force us to consider their own delinquencies in this same matter of subscription.

A second consideration must be urged, not as justifying, yet as largely palliating, unfaithfulness of clergymen to their subscriptions; and this is, the stubborn refusal of the legislature to allow them to lay aside their clerical character when they desire it.* Only last session an attempt was made in this direction; but precisely the same Episcopalian doctrinaires who bitterly assail such men as the Essayists, with equal bitterness insist on retaining them within the clerical order. This will never make it right for a clergyman to carry concealment into hypocrisy, as it is to be feared that many do; but, *as between man and man*, it does authorize any clergyman who speaks his mind to say to his brethren, "I shall not abandon my clerical rights or functions, since the law will not allow me to disown my clerical disabilities and responsibilities. And if any prosecute me by law, I will invoke the utmost letter of the law in my favour." To tax such clergymen as breaking a covenant made by them with society, is certainly unjust. And on this point Dr. Lushington appears to us (though on the whole he may seem far too favourable to the accused persons), to overstate the meaning of their subscription. He lays down (p. 11)—"The subscription to the Articles is a declaration by the subscriber of his conviction in their truth, *and a promise to abide in them*." The last words, as far as we can find, are wholly gratuitous; and the learned judge adds no justification of them, no clue to his reasons. Let it be for a moment imagined, that the subscription had been commanded by law to be made in the following words: "I declare that I from my heart believe, *and never will cease to believe*, all that is contained in the formularies." We ask boldly: If the legislature had dared to impose this, how many of the existing clergy would ever have made the declaration? Nay, further, if this interpretation be correct, all Fellows of Colleges, all Masters of Arts of the old Universities, and until recently, all members of the University of Oxford (though they may be laymen, and have ceased to belong to the Universities), still are bound *for life* to believe the Thirty-nine Articles. They made the same subscription as do the clergy, and it cannot possibly be prospective to the one, if it is not to the other. Conscious as we are, what a revulsion of feeling, what indignation, every ingenuous young man would feel, on being asked to declare that he would "always hereafter" believe this or that, we seem to have herein a sufficient and decisive disproof of this particular clause of the judgment. But the consideration that no one dreams laymen to be bound by their past subscriptions, and that the judge emphatically announces this, seems to us to put the question beyond doubt. The clergymen who believed when he subscribed, has rigidly observed good faith. To future belief he did not and could not pledge himself.

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* The law is since altered.—(Note of 1887.)

Nevertheless, this plea is obviously unavailing for the case of those clergymen who are willing at any moment to renew their old subscriptions; whether in order to receive new preferment, or because there is some authority over them which can command the reiteration of the act. It is notorious that the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford required Professor Jowett to renew his subscription, and was obeyed. Whether he could have enforced his order, had it been disobeyed, we are not exactly informed; but every one must see how unpleasant it would be for an Oxford Tutor formally to announce that he was consciously in opposition to the Church formularies—a circumstance which almost vests compulsive power in the Vice-Chancellor. And after all, this is not the weakest and worst point of the case. The position of the clerical and of the lay Fellow of a College may be the very same (except one or two less significant clauses) as far as mere subscription is concerned; but it is widely different, the moment the clergyman begins to officiate in reading the Liturgy. Forthwith, it is no longer a mere question of good faith to promises between man and man; but the priest stands before a Higher Power, and addresses Him in many words, which unless they come from the depth of the heart, are a direful and a scandalous hypocrisy. Various special pleadings may be allowed in interpreting a human covenant; everything of the kind is justly abhorred in the acts of devotion.

There are two kinds of religious controversy, as opposite in character as in results. It is possible to seek to discover in that which we are opposing, not only all that is most congenial to ourselves, and that interpretation which is least offensive to us, but also something by which we may ourselves profit, in the midst of what is most uncongenial. If we make due allowance for our own finite understanding, the necessary limitation of our own mental and religious experience, and the high improbability that able and sincere men who are widely opposed to us, should fail to develop some truth which we have not discerned; it must surely seem reasonable to approach a religious controversy, not only as critics, but also as learners; and it might seem marvellous that anyone can talk, as divines do, concerning the mysterious nature of which they are discoursing, and the puny powers of the human mind, without seeing that intellects and characters most opposite need to combine, if we are to gain any solid and trustworthy knowledge of subjects so lofty. A sound humility would assuredly infuse into religious controversies not only a noble forbearance, but hearty reciprocal appreciation. It is mournful to consider how intensely opposite to all this has been *nearly all* controversy among Christians of *nearly all* sects; who with theories of humility combine the reality of dogmatism, and hostility to men, whom all tranquil bystanders see to be generally their equals in goodness, often their superiors; men moreover, whom they will often confess to be their decided superiors in talents and attainments. "Heresies begin from learned men," Bellarmin (we believe) laid down: and we suppose that very few indeed of the clergy who have expressed most indignation against the Essayists can be judged to be their equals. Mere numbers cannot outweigh mental superiority. A hundred men of the calibre of Anytus will not make one Socrates. Of the Rev. Mr. Fendall, who prosecutes Mr. Wilson, we know nothing; but we can safely tell all the Fendalls and Burders who wish to eject from the ministry men better known to the public and more highly esteemed than they, that the real question now of chief importance is, not what the formularies have said, but what is the Truth; which is in no respect whatever determined by the Act of Uniformity.

The dogmatism of Dissenters is prompted by the assumption that they have a right to lay down the law what books are sacred and authoritative, and to infer that none have the Spirit of God who do not accept their interpretations of the sacred books. But the Church is forbidden by the ecclesiastical judge to appeal to the Scripture: the Church formularies supersede it. The dogmatism of Churchmen does not rest on personal assumptions to the same extent as that of Dissenters; but its distinctive basis is the theory or idea of *Theocracy* in the collective organism of the Church. This is the favourite and essential doctrine of the High Church, and it is made absurd and ridiculous by remembering that to abolish an Act of Parliament cuts away all the grounds of their recent proceedings against the Essayists. They have wished to exhibit the power of the Church to eject learned and pious men who are too wise to believe its doctrines; and the first result of it is, that the judge elaborately and repeatedly lays down, that the sole question for him is, whether they are criminals by Act of Parliament.

Prosecutions such as these may eject one or two valuable men from a Church which is not worthy of them: who, by obstinately resisting as long as they can, at least do the service of forcing upon statesmen the necessity of overthrowing this outrage on morality,—the dictating of religious profession. The evil, from a purely religious point of view, is enormous; it is highly discreditable to our statesmen that they are so slow to see it. The very men who are publicly appointed to instruct the nation and become their leaders in religion, are put into a cruel position, in which they are liable to be made hypocrites in the very proportion in which they cultivate their understandings. We have already insisted—from the Church-point of view, and from the assumption that the bishops and clergy possess the powers ascribed to them—on the monstrosity of putting them in bondage to subscriptions. Of course the reader will understand this to be in part *argumentum ad hominem;* but in every case it remains a monstrosity to subject the intellects of the existing clergy to enactments passed two centuries ago, when the clergy were worse informed than now, and the laity much more inflamed by religious animosities. The clergy, including bishops and other dignitaries, are under the yoke, and cannot remove it. None but the laity can help them; and on the laity rests the whole guilt of continuing a system which corrupts and ruins the position of the clergy. It necessarily destroys their influence with thoughtful men. No one can care a straw for their opinion *in favour* of existing dogmas; because they have no legal right to think otherwise. It is only when they begin to be heterodox, that they gain credit for having minds of their own; and yet simultaneously they get discredit. A yawning gulf has opened—and must grow deeper—between the philosophy of the age and the religion of the Church. The former is tested by minds most opposite and by every sort of practical trial; and, not being enforced by law, gives fair play to Truth. The latter, having no pretence whatever to proof, having artificially and formally excluded all tests of truth whatsoever, (even appeal to the Christian Scriptures!) cannot stand in such a controversy. Our statesmen, by their baneful inaction, are providing for England a catastrophe similar to that which came upon France; we mean, in its religious aspect. We do not speak as enemies of Church Establishments; on the contrary, as believing that Sectarianism is a real and great evil, and that a truly National Church, which should grow with the growth of the national mind, would be a far nobler and more beneficial system, than anything which can result from a mere violent overthrow; which, nevertheless, is being prepared by the stupid and obstinate conservatism, for which we unhesitatingly blame the laity and public men.

Members of Parliament will reply, "What can we do? If we attack the Church, we shall offend many of our constituents; and after all, we shall carry nothing. Only ministers now-a-days can carry anything of importance." We are quite aware of the pernicious concentration of legislative and executive powers which the ambition of Cabinet Ministers has succeeded in bringing about. It is not probable that a private member would succeed in carrying a Bill: but if all private members spoke out their convictions boldly, whenever occasion offered, it would not be long before a Minister would be found to take the necessary lead; as happened in the case of abolishing University subscriptions for Matriculation and for the Bachelor's degree. But a fundamental blunder is made in supposing that in denouncing subscription to creeds, we ask public men to *attack the Church.* On the contrary, we implore them to come to the rescue of the Church, and to release the bishops and clergy *as an Order*, even against the will of enslaved *individuals*, from an unmanly and unchristian infliction.

This is no finesse and pretence, but plain fact. Nor is any hostility to the existing creed here properly involved. If we believed the fundamental points of Anglicanism ever so heartily, we should only be the more ashamed to allow it to be thought that the bishops would be sure to disbelieve, unless constrained by law to belief. In fact, we cannot understand with what face any devotee of the Church (especially including as it does pretensions so extravagant of priestly eminence) can come forward to insult either the formularies or the prelates by such an idea. If the formularies are true, it is to be presumed that men picked out for wisdom and goodness will abide in them willingly and of themselves. If the reasonable presumption is, that trained theologians and pious men will disbelieve unless put into chains by the law, it must follow that the formularies are false; and then, how great the guilt of Parliament in having sustained them! And all this time it is notorious, that, though a man's society and his reading immensely affect his creed, law can have little or no power over it, except by altering his reading or his society. *If* then the tendency to disbelief be so violent, it must inevitably operate on all who enlarge their mental horizon—that is to say, we have it conceded that the law now provides that the teachers of the nation shall either be narrow in knowledge or unbelievers in the public creed! Why are we to admit, for a moment, that those are the friends of the Church, who, with no imaginable good result, maintain such a tyrannical and debasing infliction on the clergy? Without any sinister meaning or reserve of thought, we say that the more true the system, the less it needs such aid; for, the more certainly, as in the case of astronomy or any other true science, will the best men and best minds tend to unanimous agreement in it. Those who dread the opposite, secretly disbelieve the perfection of that which they extol. When a Brahmin has made a monkey into a god, he is in natural tremor lest wise men should not worship; then, if he can, he will call on the law to compel it. Such is the only logic of political Anglicanism.

FEASIBLE CHURCH REFORM.

But, many a statesman will reply, "How can we secure the necessary adaptation between the clergy and the congregations, if the subscriptions be abolished?"—It is astonishing that men should so argue, who know the broad fact, two centuries old, that the present method by no means closely secures such adaptation. In spite of subscriptions, the difference of opinion in clergymen is and always has been very great, to the frequent annoyance of congregations. So long as the Liturgy is maintained, the chasm between different clergymen cannot open wider than it has been from the beginning of the system. A Liturgy is a far more severe test of opinion than Articles, because (as above insisted) piety impedes special pleading concerning the words. Great alarm is felt or pretended, lest Unitarians* find admission into the Church ministry. Of course that is now possible, if men are unscrupulous, or have principles of interpretation highly subtle and supple; but if otherwise, the Liturgy (to say nothing of its creeds) effectually excludes them from parochial service. We do not hesitate to insist, that there is no difficulty at all in the practical problem, if only statesmen are willing *to lay responsibility on the right shoulders*, that is, on the BISHOPS. Nobody would be able to call this anything but an acting-out of Episcopalianism of the first water. No debating of the details of religious belief is wanted in Parliament: the very principle is wholly inadmissible. All that is needed, is, *first*, to reduce the whole of subscription to this single article: "I am willing to use the formularies of the Church, into the ministry of which I seek admittance:" *next*, to vest in every bishop regulated powers for relaxing the severities of the Liturgy to his own clergy. Only the mode of regulating becomes question of detail. We should propose, that any clergyman who desired a modification of any words in the Liturgy which he is required to read, should present to this effect a formal request to the bishop, who should be empowered to grant the request, subject to the sole condition of laying before Parliament every year a return, which should state what requests had been made and to what he had consented. On the one hand, no High Churchman could assert that the enactment bore a hostile aspect to the Church. We do not affect to agree with High Churchmen, only not needlessly to clash with their theory. At present the bishops are too like the Grand Llama of Thibet, in theory a god on earth, in practice a puppet. So, all our clergy are ecclesiastically endowed with divine power of binding and loosing, but politically are themselves bound in heavy fetters. We would not give to any of them, singly or collectively, power to tighten other people's chains: nevertheless it would be an access to a bishop's dignity to be empowered to loose the bonds of others, and of course his own. On the other hand, no statesman would need to fear that the clergy would move too fast for the congregations and thus involve public strife; for the "responsibilities of office" would lie heavily on the bishops, nor is there the slightest chance of their making too many concessions or too fast. By such a method the Parliament would in ten years' time have materials before it distinctly showing the true state of clerical opinion; but independently of that, the Liturgy would be, bit by bit, rid of whatever acts as an exasperating prick, instead of subserving its legitimate devotional uses. The schism between the pious thought of this century and the enactments of the past would be healed in the only possible way, by modifying those enactments, but without unseemly struggles or heart-hardening familiar arguings concerning things ineffably sacred.

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* Unitarians born are generally addicted to blunt truth; and will never crawl into the Church ministry by subtlety.

When through the vast development of modern knowledge the ablest minds have run far a-head of the contemporaries of Laud or Sherlock in Cosmogony, in Ethnology, in Astronomy, in Physiology, in History, in Metaphysics, in Morals, in the laws of Literary Interpretation, in questions of Literary Genuineness, in understanding of the mind of Antiquity;—is any one senseless enough to think that he can do anything but swamp and drown the Church by keeping fast tied round the neck of her clergy, under sacred pretences, loads of opinion which even Puritans and Biblists cannot receive?

FROM LUTHER TO COLENSO.

[1863.]

ABRIDGED FROM "THE WESTMINSTER REVIEW."

WHAT was the problem presented to the mind of Luther and his contemporary religious reformers? Undoubtedly it was *to recover Apostolic doctrine.* Every other reply is a mistaking of means for end. Individual freedom, or, as it was called, private judgment, was generally esteemed to be not only in itself a right and a duty, but also to conduce to this great end, the recovery of Apostolic truth. But freedom was trampled under foot unceremoniously, by Luther equally as by Calvin, the moment it appeared to lead away from what they esteemed to be the Truth of the Gospel, which they identified with the doctrine of the Apostles of Christ, as appreciated by themselves. It has often been observed, that that large freedom of mind and expression which we have really attained, was by no means desired or approved by the Reformers, to whose bold assertion of it for themselves we are greatly indebted.

That the Reformation was everywhere arrested prematurely and but half completed, has been many times elaborately set forth. As regards the Continent, the noble work of Ranke on "The Popes" displays the combined political and ecclesiastical forces which, soon after Luther's death, commenced a steady retrogression, and gave a permanent triumph to the house of Hapsburgh and the Jesuits over a vast breadth of the Continent. In England the premature death of our Edward VI. notoriously checked the Reforming movement. The violent reaction under Queen Mary was by no means brought back by Elizabeth to the point from which Mary started; and notoriously out of the trimming principles of Elizabeth rose the schism of the Puritans. How the Puritanical, or rather the Calvinistic, doctrine aided to arrest the Reformation, has been caustically stated in the well-known phrase of Hume, that when men were called to choose whether God was a wafer or was a tyrant, they acquiesced in accepting him as a wafer. One small sect of Christians, called in modern days Unitarians, has long since asserted that in respect to various doctrines the Reformation did not go so far as it ought. But until quite recent times the full meaning of this complaint has been most imperfectly conceived, nor has any organized community of Christians—with partial and fitful exception of the Quakers—yet taken it up on its rightful and broad ground. In France and Germany the matter is better understood; but in England few indeed of those who mean to be Protestants of a high and pure order discern in what points the Reformers lamentably failed of going back to Apostolic teaching.

Nothing was more natural, or *primâ facie* more reasonable than the first proceeding of Luther and his fellows—we may add, of his predecessors in England, from Wickliffe downward. In order to return to Apostolic doctrine, they threw themselves back on the (reputed) Apostolic writings, accepting them with little or no scruple from the testimony of the Church: then, finding these writings to be widely at variance with the Church-teaching, they used them to supersede and overthrow the current opinion of Church authority. Thus, against the written code of the Councils and the unwritten dogmatic power of the Pope and clergy, they set up the written code of the New Testament, as contained in certain books called Canonical. They forgot that Apostles had not only often doubted, and sometimes met for consultation; but had, at least on one great and critical question, publicly quarrelled, and that Paul (by his own account) had denounced Peter as making vain the grace of God: and consequently, that the "Apostolic doctrine" which had to be "recovered" was not the private opinions or passing arguments of any one Apostle, but the broad and deep truth which they held *in common*. This, and this only, was Christianity. Perhaps at first the Reformers were intending to enact a negative rather than a positive written law; at least the 6th Article of the Church of England is remarkably negative in its tone. It says that Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; and therefore *nothing* may be imposed which *cannot* be proved therefrom. The spirit which dictated that Article is widely different from that of him who says, "*Every* thing must be believed which I can logically infer therefrom." The first Reformers made a noble step in the direction of truth, as great as could be expected from men reared amid such confused thought and manifold errors. It is not wonderful that *they* did not see,—but it is guilt in *us*, if we insist on shutting our eyes and refusing to see,—that they were not at all putting their pupils into the same position of noble freedom in which the Apostles put their converts. For the "Bible" (or, if so it be limited, the New Testament,) to which the Reformers pointed as the necessary and sufficient Guide—as the Sacred Code—as the law of Life—as the test of Truth and decider of controversies,—did not exist during the preaching of Paul; and was scarcely collected into a single corpus, much less was recognized as a code, for more than a century after the death of Jesus. This single fact, notorious and undeniable, shows at once how delusive was the work of the Reformation; how widely its preachers erred from their own avowed and essential aim, of reproducing the position of the Apostolic Church.

The contrast between the spiritual status of Paul's converts and of modern Anglicans, whether of the high or low church, is flagrant; as is that between the Apostles themselves and the hierarchy supposed to be their successors. Between the fisherman and the prelate in his palace or his carriage: between the tentmaker at his work, or trudging on foot in the dusty road, and the lord bishop on the benches of Parliament and in the Royal levee, there is not a greater outward contrast than between the Law as conceived by Paul and by an ordinary Anglican. Paul did not put a Bible into the hands of converts, as that to which they were to submit; nor did he even hand to them a fragment of the New Testament, as the law of their faith and life. Nothing can be more unshrinking than his language concerning Freedom, while with the modern (would-be) Christian the word *Freethinking* is identified with impiety. The written word is by Paul occasionally extolled as having served a good purpose in its day, but is avowed to be substantially superseded by the coming of the Spirit. It was suited to the son of the bondwoman, and even to the true heir so long as he was in childhood; but now,—the law of the Spirit of life has made us free from the law of sin and death, that is, from the old law of the letter. "Ye have been called unto *Liberty*," says he: "only use not liberty as an occasion of the flesh; but by *Love* serve one another." Inward light and inward love are the only Law preached by him: they are his Thirty-nine Articles: all law of "the letter" he both practically and expressly by word disowns. "For the letter" (he says) "killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." It is quite undeniable, that however much he may argue from the Old Testament to prove a point to those who believed the authority of the book, he scornfully rejects it as an authority, whenever its results oppose that which we ought to discern by the Spirit. The book was with him a material to be judiciously used,* not a law to be slavishly submitted to. It is equally undeniable, that he did not put any other written code in its place; and so far from indicating that this was a temporary and lamentable defect, to be soon repaired by the composition of a new statute-book, he glories in the absence of a written code, as characteristic of his Gospel. "For if the ministration of death, *written and engraven in stones*, was glorious, how shall not the ministration of *the Spirit* be rather glorious?" His pointed depreciation of "the letter" in numerous passages is the more remarkable, inasmuch as to those born in heathenism and accustomed to a wretchedly low morality, the danger of the Old Man encroaching on the New, and obscuring the purer insight, was real and urgent: yet it did not lead Paul to construct or recommend any general code of morality or of doctrine. He was satisfied to give his opinion as a wise man on each practical case, as it occurred. Nor did any part of the Christian Church, until long after, stand up for any law of the letter, except so far as it was avowedly Judaical and devoted to ceremonies.

So too as regards Freedom the tone of this great Apostle is in vehement opposition to that of Churchmen in every modern sect called orthodox. To him the word Freedom was not hateful or alarming, but matter of boasting. But what sympathy with freedom has any collective hierarchy ever shown? When do they sound the trumpet of the Gospel:—Stand fast in your freedom: Beloved! judge the spirits: Let the prophets speak, and let the rest (the laity) judge: Prove all things; hold fast that which is good: Let no man judge you in regard to meat or drink, new moons or sabbaths, which were mere shadows of things to come: Remember that the law of the Spirit within you has set you free from the old law?—Such doctrine differs as much from that of mere textual expositors, as the genial breeze of summer from the chill of Arctic regions. But in fact we might have been able to predict, before opening the leaves of the Apostolic epistles, that Freedom of Judgment, freedom unfettered by any authoritative written law, was, and could not but be, the key-note sounding beneath all their preaching. It was the *condition* of listening to them. To have preached the authority of an established code must have led all foreigners to shut their ears. In addressing those without, Paul, equally with Colenso, had to start from the assumption, that the heathen who listens judges from his common sense and conscience. Before he is converted, he cannot be made to assume the truth and authority of a Hebrew book; yet he is expected to renounce all trust in the authority and truth of his native traditions and native priests. The first appeal of the Christian Apostle to him is an exhortation to use his common-sense; to cease to be a child; to disbelieve "old wives' fables;" to trust conscience as a voice of God within him,—not always clear, full, and certain, yet a precious guide, without which he must ever remain in darkness. The next appeal presents to him (not a code, but) some portion of Christian doctrine, *to be judged of* in contrast with heathen follies. To inculcate free-thinking is the first great effort of the missionary, in old or new times: not one step can he take, if he do not effectually imbue the heathen hearer with this revolutionary element. Nor is he anxious to obtrude upon him any dark questions about which there can be possible dispute among Christians themselves; much less to put forward as the Creed to be received on the threshold of the Church such a doctrine as the infallibility of a great volume. But after calling men to exercise their critical powers freely in rejecting heathen mysteries or other sacred follies, and to adopt this and that Christian truth, *not* because enjoined by external authority, *but* because they are inwardly discerned as true by the heathen's own mind; it would have been a moral impossibility to demand of the convert a renunciation of the same free-thinking, the moment he had passed through the waters of Baptism. It would have been a gross fraud and treachery, to "call him to Liberty and then entangle him under a yoke of Bondage;" in which very words Paul denounces the attempt of his Jewish brethren to subject the Gentile converts to the yoke of the Pentateuch. Moreover, it would have been a wicked sophism to exalt conscience as the voice of God, as long as the Apostle wanted its aid in a heathen for the overthrow of a heathen doctrine, and then to scold it down as the voice of the Devil, whenever it resists in a Christian some notion recommended on Christian authority. No Christian teacher will surely pretend, that by entering the Church and receiving the living Spirit promised by Christ, a man became *less* able to judge for and by his own mind and conscience as to what (alleged) divine truths are really true, than he had been in his heathen state. For these and other reasons, great severity of language and contempt is directed by Paul against those who sought to subject the Gentiles to the authority of the "Bible;" men who "desire to be teachers of the Law, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm." For such men he invents the contumelious expression, The *concision;* judging them unworthy of the title Circumcision, which had in the past a sacred and honourable history, and in the present is glorified by a spiritual interpretation in which its gross materialism is burnt up and perishes. "For WE (he says) are the Circumcision; who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, *and have no confidence in the flesh.*"

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* This is undoubtedly the meaning of the celebrated text, 2 Tim. iii. 16: "Every divinely inspired writing *is also profitable* for teaching," &c., &c.

Thus, the first great error of the Reformers was, that in their desire to find a firm standing-ground, from which to oppose the errors and pretensions of the old Church, and hereby work back to Apostolic beliefs, they set up for the "Bible" claims *wholly unapostolic*, assuming it to be that Infallible Arbiter of truth which the Pope and Councils pretended to be. The further the Reformation went in space and time, the more glaring and outrageous did this error become, until little by little the old Church began to appear more reasonable in its fundamental assumptions than the new. Thus, in Ultra-Protestantism, and eminently in Scotland, notions about the Old Testament and the Sabbath established themselves, which would have excited indignation and contempt in Luther and Calvin. We call the error glaring, to put forth as *Apostolic* doctrine, "The Bible, and the Bible only, is our religion," though notoriously, on the one hand, the book of the New Testament did not yet exist when the Apostles preached; and, on the other hand, the Jewish Scriptures, however used as material of argument to be spiritualized freely, are not only never put forward in any extant Apostolic document as a law of life or as a rule of truth, but, so far as we know this to have been attempted, the attempt is denounced by the great Gentile Apostle as a making void of the grace of Christ. Further, when the observance of the Sabbath is by name classed by St. Paul with new moons and things gone by; and when it is named by Jesus only to be undervalued; we call it outrageous that the would-be Reformers should go back to "beggarly elements," as the indignant Apostle calls them. We might proceed to entitle the error grotesque, of setting up as essential to Christianity a belief in Noah's ark, the passage of the Red Sea, the speaking ass or serpent. Who can imagine Paul or John at Athens preaching at

Mars' Hill, and staking the truth of Christ with a disciple of Aristotle on any of these things; or, say, on the universal deluge, or on the morality of the sacrifice of Isaac? The first Apostles (and their successors for some time) had too strong sense, and too deep a moral nature, to fall into any of these monstrosities, which would have nipped Christianity in the bud. They keenly felt that the strength and core of their doctrine lay in its *moral* superiority, and that it was to the MORAL CONSCIENCE that they must appeal; while to encumber their doctrine by alleged miracles a thousand years old, or stories about events long earlier than the art of writing, would have been insanity and a sort of suicide. Our Indian missionaries well know what certain discomfiture they encounter, if they invite a battle of traditional miracles: but, even without any such experience, all ought to see how impossible it was for a Christian Apostle to refuse baptism to a heathen because he did not believe the miracles of the Pentateuch (for, what evidence could he possibly offer?); or, what more unequitable, than, having baptized him while in unbelief of these miracles, to revile him for the unbelief after he was within the Church? In the "Acts of the Apostles," and in the "Apostles' Creed," we see no trace of a convert being expected to believe in the Pentateuch.

But a second error committed by the Reformers (though, we believe, unintended by those of the first generation) has been still more fatal in its results. We refer to the dogmatizing as to what Books were canonical, and the making of doctrinal Articles. In the first instance, it was but natural to set forth in what they agreed, both as a mutual satisfaction, and as a protest against evil imputations. But the moment that such documents were imposed as authoritative, the whole position of the Protestant Church became logically untenable; for the imposer made himself a Pope, while declaiming against Popish usurpation: and if such formulas were allowed to be practically without appeal and unchangeable, no other result was possible than what has occurred. On the one side, schisms and secessions, in spite of persecution; on the other, stagnation and *congelation in the residual Church*, which submitted tamely to the imposition. Thenceforth, the Christian not only had not the freedom of members of the ancient church of Corinth or Ephesus (where a private member might frankly and flatly oppose* an Apostle, without being thought to become an "infidel"), but he was no longer allowed to listen to an Apostle with his own ears; he was commanded to accept the Apostle's meaning second-hand. And why so? Is it because the layman is too stupid, and cannot be trusted to interpret the Apostle correctly? Is it because he is unlearned?—because he needs to read the original Greek, and go through theological study, before he will be competent? Nay, not so; for, wonderful to tell, *the layman alone is left free. He* retains "private judgment;" but the learned clergyman, the professor of theology, the bishop, are precisely those who are forbidden* to judge for themselves what an Apostle meant! Of course, the explanation of this is purely political and tyrannical, not religious; otherwise such a development was morally impossible. The imposers were laymen; the accomplices were a certain number of active and eager priests; the victims were the priests collectively, present and future, and the millions who were to be taught. The princes and statesmen whose power enacted these things, played a game of their own, which, however iniquitous, had a certain self-consistency, so long as they forbade (as they always did at first forbid) the preaching and teaching of unordained persons, who had not subscribed the State Articles. But from the day that they ceased to prosecute and punish unauthorized teaching, all use in the imposition of the Articles broke down. A liberty was given to the laity and to the ignorant, which was refused to the clergy, to the bishops, to the very professors of theology. Such a system does not produce the external Church unity for which alone a tyrannical ruler cares; nor can it tend to Truth, for which we presume a good Christian to care.

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* Diotrephes, it seems, refused to allow John's epistle to be read to the church. But perhaps this was *not* the Apostle, but John the elder of Ephesus.

The *permanent* imposition of creeds and tests compiled within half a century of the first awakening, is the more unequitable and the more disastrous, from the remarkable confusion of thought which then prevailed as to the joint authority of Fathers, Councils, and the Scripture. In those days, and indeed much later, classical scholars like Rollin equalized historical authorities: incorporated into one system the Assyrian and Argive dynasties, the Theseus of Plutarch, the Cyrus of Herodotus, and the Pericles of Thucydides; mingled Dionysius and Livy into one history, as though they could not be at variance. The very same amiable puerility led theological inquirers to assume that the "early" Church agreed with the Apostles; and under the word "early" they liberally included the first four centuries at least. It was assumed that the Three Creeds were (of course) apostolic, and that the First Four Councils were valid and authoritative. The *reason*, indeed, was alleged that "they could be proved by Scripture;" but any one who denied the fact was unceremoniously overruled; and, in the Anglican Church at least, immense weight was given to the "Fathers" of the fourth century, and, both here and in Germany, to Augustine in particular, who was born three hundred years after the death of the Apostle Paul. No influence could justly be claimed by his *date;* yet as a fact an enormous authority was conceded to him, not merely as a wise and good man, but as a "Father" of the Church. This is the more remarkable, inasmuch as some of his doctrines are rejected with exasperation by the Council of Trent, and have been ascribed to his youthful Manicheeism by some of our High Church. Such were the mixed sources of the Anglican test-subscriptions; a heterogeneous mass from the New Testament, Fathers, Creeds, and Councils, assumed to be harmonious by minds but half open to the facts of ecclesiastical history—ignorant how in those four centuries copious streams from Alexandrian Platonism, from Persian Manicheeism, from Gnosticism, and from Judaism, had mingled with the generally noble teachings of Paul, who, in fighting against Rabbinism on its own chosen ground, had himself unawares become far too Rabbinical in his argumentation.

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* Yet not strictly so. We are reminded by the Bishop of London, that a clergyman is bound to think freely, but bound *also* to abandon his profession if he alight on something opposed to his subscriptions! We are all free to break the law, but under heavy penalties.

The peculiar calamity of this to the Protestant churches lay in the fact that from Paul to Augustine was a period of perpetually increasing degradation to the intellect of mankind, and with it to Christian doctrine. Hume has not gone beyond the truth in his keen remark, that on every successive controversy the more irrational side prevailed. Augustine, with much depth of sentiment, and a noble sincerity which will ever be honoured, had undoubtedly a most gloomy religion, which taught funereal conceptions of God, and led men to brood over their own wickedness, instead of subduing it by noble action, and filling their minds with a cheerful faith. From him came to Luther, to Calvin, and to the Puritans, all that was darkest and most painful in their creed. From him, we presume, the Anglican Church derives its protest against "Pelagius," as also the atrocious notion that we are not born children of God, but children of wrath; although the *word* (no doubt) is Paul's. What has it availed to pretend that the Apostolic doctrine is the true doctrine, when it is thus deliberately overlaid by the "Fathers" and by the Councils of the fourth century? The Protestant Church of England has committed precisely the offence which Protestants impute to Rome, of overlaying the "word of God" by tradition and by human authority. It is better to stop at the fourth century, than go on to the sixth or tenth: it is better to take the First Four Councils than all the Councils down to Trent (especially if "heretical" Councils are arbitrarily weeded out); yet, in principle, to do one or the other is equally irrational, equally unequitable; and equally overthrows the professed object of recovering Apostolical doctrine.

In passing, we may observe how dependent on the National Church has been the theology of our most numerous dissenters,—Independents, Baptists, and Methodists. They have taken the "Canonical Books" on trust, they fear to abandon the "Creeds" or to swerve towards "Pelagius;" have gone beyond Judaical error with Puritanism and the Low Church, and have quarrelled with Anglicanism on precisely its least important and most innocent points,—mere forms of government. They have done much service in zeal for morality and for freedom, when the hierarchy had lost the former zeal with the latter; but towards solving the real problem of the Reformation they have done little or nothing. The reason of this we take to be, that so soon as any system of doctrine is pronounced authoritative, the very fact gives prominence and importance to precisely its weakest or falsest parts. A verse pregnant with noble, holy, and clear sentiment, gives nothing to a commentator to say; but a dark, paradoxical, or unsound doctrine, affords not only abundant exercise for ingenuity, but also a test of *faith* (!) When Paul says, that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, but the same Lord over all is rich to all that call upon him; there is no *merit* in believing what so commends itself to the conscience. But when he argues, that God hated Esau before he was born, irrespective of his works, and has power, like a potter, to make out of man, as out of clay, vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction; there *is* merit in believing what sounds so shocking. Hence so many minds gravitate towards the *Rabbinism* of Paul, so long as they hold it a duty to submit to him without inquiry; thus also they fail of doing justice to that good and wise man, nor ever see his grand doctrines in their full significance. When to this was added a bowing of the intellect (quite un-Pauline) to the Pentateuch as authoritative, our popular Dissent, called Evangelical, became substantially nothing but a mean Rabbinism.

We should be glad to believe that the National Church is waking out of these dreams. Messrs. Jowett, Wilson and Rowland Williams have caused an excitement at once wholesome and hopeful. The phenomenon of Bishop Colenso is still more startling. His position is essentially different from theirs in this respect: that *they* do not profess to be consciously out of harmony with their subscriptions; they endeavour to show that the bands of the Church are elastic enough to include them: but *he* distinctly avows that the enactments are improper, that he cannot conscientiously use one at least of the prayers; and he implores the laity to relieve the clergy from the unjust restrictions. This is so very novel a fact, that, although in our last number we dwelt on many topics suggested by his first volume, much still is left even from the general question, besides the special matter of his second volume. Before we come closer to his subject, we wish to pass in review some broad aspects of the National Church as the history of the past exhibits it.

Long experience proves undeniably, that the position of the Anglican bishops (and of the clergy in proportion to their dignity) tends *to emasculate good men.* To stand up for ceremonies, for sanctimony, for church fees or other gains, for church power or episcopal privilege, is not at all uncongenial to the Episcopate; but how many bishops ever yet have been champions of righteousness? To humanize and christianize the nation, was, as Dr. Arnold judged, the proper function of bishops in the House of Lords; and on this account he defended the principle of lord-prelates. But when we look back through the last two centuries (a time long enough to test an institution), we find a terrible contrast of fact to theory. In this period the nation has been afflicted by profligate courts, venal statesmen, flagitious drunkenness in all classes, corrupt constituencies, oaths multiplied so as to ensure perjury, and worst of all, very many unjust wars. The criminal code was long cruel in the extreme, the prisons were a torture, and a fountain of moral leprosy,—as we fear they still are. Lotteries demoralized the people; the fairs and wakes were scenes of profligacy. An inhuman slave-trade shipped off captive negroes as unceremoniously and as regularly as cargoes of cattle. Colonial slavery was in vigour, and its horrors were no secret. In India our arms and our government were stained with cruelty, avarice, and treachery. But we are not aware that the bench of Bishops ever distinguished themselves by zealous exertion against such things: nay, not that so much as *one* bishop has ever become signal for active zeal against even *one* of these glaring moral evils. To fix ideas, take two topics, War and Slavery. What unjust wars have they collectively opposed? What part against the slave-trade or against slavery have they played, whether in regard to our own colonial struggle, or now in the crisis of America? And yet a Wilberforce is on the bench. We are aware, that it is a hereditary rule of statecraft to appoint a timid man to be Archbishop of Canterbury; but among the lords all are peers. Experience seems to prove, that as the man who becomes a slave loses (according to Homer) half his virtue, so the man who is enslaved to Articles generally loses half his moral courage:—exceptions are rare, nor need we here analyse such. But the virtue which is so racy and full of life that Priests' Orders cannot extinguish it, is exposed to a still worse blight under the formula of Consecration. Ceremonialism, after this, (with the labour of laying-on of hands and perhaps of signing leases superadded) dries up the juices of a heart previously bursting with philanthropy or keenly craving for truth.

One may even see the unsoundness of Anglicanism in the phenomena of recent ecclesiastical writing. Any ecclesiastic may sap the foundation of Biblism to any extent, by accurate criticism, by local comments on Egypt and the Holy Land, by geological and ethnological discussion; and so long as he does not distinctly avow any conclusions, though all see and know them, a decorous silence is preserved: or if the writer purposely underdraws the conclusions, he may even gain credit for learning and discretion. But the instant that the simple truth is spoken, a cry of indignation arises. One most disgraceful topic, urged recently before an immense circle of readers, may be briefly expressed in the popular words: "Why cannot you hold your peace, and not frighten the bigots? Of course we all know that you are right; but you are a fool to speak so plainly." Simultaneously, all the organs of Ecclesiasticism and Biblism give tongue: and their topic is, *not* to disprove the facts, nor to disconnect them from their alleged conclusion, by any learned and thorough treatment; *but*, either to assail the writer as violating his subscriptions, or to urge the *further* dreadful results which they will inconveniently have to admit, if what he says be true. It has been said, not more caustically than truly, that there are three stages of ecclesiastical argument, when any scientific truth is developed offensive to them: first, it is said, that it is not scientifically true; next, when that fails, it is said to be impious, and a storm of indignation follows; lastly, when the laity show that dust cannot be thrown into their eyes, it is said, that it *is* true, but very unimportant, very old and notorious.

Now (we venture to assert) that which draws towards Bishop Colenso sympathy and admiration, is, precisely the frankness which has raised this storm. Men are delighted, that at last a Bishop does *speak out.* The wise and welcome sentiments of the Bishop of London, excellent as far as they go, are too trimming and apologetic. They gain *approval,* rather than *applause.* They may be just, but they do not meet the exigency; and have nothing brave, where bravery is chiefly needed. The Bishop of St. David's speech is interpreted simply to mean, that he remembers the peccadillos of his youth, conceived by the layman, brought to the birth by the clergyman, and disclaimed by the bishop; and that he does not like the annoyance and discredit of punishing a brother bishop for literary judgments which all the world must believe Bishop Thirlwall to hold, until he solemnly recants and refutes his own book. If the nation is to have a warm, practical, religious faith, it must have religious leaders whose hearts come out to the surface of their lips. It suspects, it pities, or it despises religious teachers who are evidently less vehement to know or to tell the true creed, than anxious not to clash with that which is enacted. Secresy, reserve, dissimulation, esoteric meanings, may be pardonable in statecraft; but in religion are detestable. A favourable contrast is drawn for the Bishop of Natal, even at the expense of the "Essayists," for his honourable downrightness. Besides his earnest desire to warn his readers of his conclusions, (so far as he clearly sees that his arguments must carry them,) he has introduced the novel and important method of giving the counter-arguments of the ablest, most learned and esteemed champions on the other side. This is perhaps the most effective peculiarity in his book. The public, many of whom would else say, "Perhaps this might be answered, if any one equal to the task would take the trouble," see what is the strongest thing which the opposite side can say, and what striking admissions they find themselves constrained to make. Colenso is at the same time forward to avow his consciousness, that his conclusions are inconsistent with certain details of the Liturgy; but with the simplicity of an upright conscience, he implores of the laity aid to alter the formulas. Fully aware that his good faith is unimpeachable, inasmuch as he believed when he subscribed, he proclaims at once his submission to authority, if enforced against him, and his resolution to follow truth, whithersoever it may lead. When this unshrinking and avowed willingness to follow the indications of truth draws upon him violent animosity from the real clerical party, and from hypocritical churchmen, but gains for him warm applause from millions outside; we find herein a signal mark of the gulf which has opened between the intelligent part of the nation and the church which calls itself national. *In the nation is truthfulness, in the church is a dread of the light.*

The moral summary of Bishop Colenso is contained in the following, p. 371:—

> "He [the God of Truth] calls upon us now in this age, as He did in the days of the Reformation or of the first publication of Christianity, to make a complete revision of all our religious views in this respect. We shall best serve Him by giving ourselves piously and faithfully to the consideration of this great question of our day. . . . A true Christian is not at liberty to lay aside, as inconvenient or discomforting, any single *fact* of science, whether of critical or of historical research, or of any other kind, which God in His gracious providence is pleased to bring before him."

He adds, that especially those who have leisure, talents, and the office of teaching, are bound to enter such critical inquiries, and to accept whatever is established by them as true. Again, p. 381:—

> "It may be,—rather, it is, as I believe, undoubtedly—the fact that God himself, by the power of the Truth, will take from us in this age the Bible as an *idol*, which we have set up against His will, to bow down to it and worship it. But while He takes it away thus with the one hand, does He not also restore it to us with the other,—not to be put in the place of God, and served with idolatrous worship,—but to be reverenced as a Book, the best of books, the work of living men like ourselves; of men, I mean, in whose hearts the same human thoughts were stirring, the same hopes and fears were dwelling, the same gracious Spirit was operating, three thousand years ago, as now?"

Thus we are brought back to the point from which we started. Bishop Colenso puts his finger on *Bibliolatry* as the cardinal error which it is the duty of this age to abandon. This was the critical mistake of the first Reformers, the evil legacy they have left to us. Its mischief is not to be measured by the definite misguidance of single texts, but by the moral paralysis it has induced. Take any of the monster evils of the world, as slavery, political tyranny, war, pauperism, and ask how they are dealt with by the clergy in general. You will find that the argument concerning them is made one of text-weighing. Words which were wise and just in their day are adopted as an eternal law, to the paralysis of the moral sense, and the depression of human welfare. The character of the clergy and credit of the Church are only damaged by all this; and what good can Christianity get from it? So long as the clergy think themselves bound to defend things that are refuted ten times over by science and reason and common sense, they can gain nothing but the reputation of being uncandid and unscrupulous, besides all the ridicule which must follow the attempt to elevate trifles or absurdities into divine religion. Who can preserve his gravity on reading in Captain Clapperton's "Africa," how horrifically a Moorish woman described him to her daughter: "He eats pork, and will go to hell?" And is it less ludicrous to teach that a man falls under the wrath of God for not believing the story of Noah's menagerie, or any of the incongruities narrated in an anonymous book, concerning events which long preceded the rise of literature? Why are these speculations more to be respected than that of the birth of Minerva and of Venus, or the story of Deucalion and Pyrrha?

A religious Reformation, in the very direction to which Colenso points, is demanded by the most intelligent part of the nation. Men are sick of glozing pretentiousness, of sanctimony joined with overbearing conduct and damnatory assumptions. They crave a more humane, tender, and cheerful religion, which shall teach of God as a father, not as a tyrant, over all nations of mankind and every man in each. What the religion shall be *called*, thousands care but little; but it must in many respects be very different from what is now enacted by law, or professed by "orthodox" dissenters, if it is to reign in a Church of the Future. It must not tamper with the primary morality stamped by God in the human heart, and appeal to some sacred "letter" in justification. It must not preach slavery—social, political, or religious. It must disown and denounce tyranny and shedding of innocent blood as frankly as do the Hebrew Psalms. It must not be afraid of freedom, *nor of criticism:* therefore, it must not be tied to a legal standard, but be left as free as all fruitful and living science. It must maintain the rights of the needy, and not fawn on power and rank. It must not justify arrogance, bully men's consciences, threaten them with God's wrath for honestly seeking after truth; or give them unintelligible riddles and self-contradictory propositions under pretence of instruction. When they ask for bread, it must not hand to them a stone or a viper. If a hierarchy are still to sit among the peers, they must take a lead in the active promotion of public morality, and in every humane and elevating measure. Purity of conduct and motive, kindness and philanthropy, even-handed justice to all orders of the State and to foreign nations, must be valued *more*, and agreement of opinion *less*, in the religion of the future; and then we shall soon approximate towards that agreement which now is sought for in vain. Our religion must no longer teach us haughty airs towards "heretics," or a heartless inability to esteem "pagan" virtue, and to discern the Spirit of God in spite of form or disguise. It must teach a higher *international morality;* must limit war to the execution of a *judicial* process, solemnly and publicly performed; and must verily and truly make the brotherhood of all mankind prominent in every public act. Every word that Bishop Colenso writes assures us that he would move on with heart and soul, not so much towards recovering the *exact form* of Apostolic religion, as towards a *higher state* which they dimly augured, vehemently desired, but for which the fulness of time was not then come.

AGAINST RELIGIOUS HERO-MAKING.

[1864.]

Address in a Unitarian Chapel, Finsbury.

FOR more than twenty years we have been made familiar with the phrase Hero-Worship. It has been applied not only in the regions of politics and literature, but in religion, as the phrase itself strictly claims. We have been told, from very opposite quarters, that the excellence, as well as the characteristic, of the Christian religion turns on its venerating a personal hero in Jesus of Nazareth. Many who regard Jesus as a mere man, yet insist upon inscribing themselves his servants and followers, and on so wedding their honour for him with their adoration to God most high, as systematically to incorporate the two. Nay, some who utterly disown allegiance to Jesus—who think him to have taught many things erroneously, and to have had nothing supernatural in his character, in his powers, in his knowledge, in his virtue, in his birth, or in his communications with God—still maintain that he is fitly called the Regenerator of mankind, and ought to receive—I know not what acknowledgment—as our Saviour. It appears then not superfluous to bestow a little space on the treatment of this question.

I need hardly observe that personal qualities alone in no case constitute a hero. Action and success must be added; and action cannot succeed until the times are ripe. No one knows this better than the true hero. True genius is modest in self-appreciation, and is fully aware how many other men could have achieved the same results if the same rare conjuncture of circumstances had presented itself to them. Men of genius are fewer than common men, but they are no accident. God has provided for their regular and continuous recurrence; their birth is ordinary and certain in every nation which is counted by millions. The same is true in every form of mental pre-eminence, whether capacity for leadership, or genius for science, or religious and moral susceptibility. Religion, separate from morals, is, of course, only fanaticism. We venerate religion only when built upon pure morals. Moral religion is notoriously a historic growth, and has depended on traditional culture at least as much as what is especially called science; and its progress is not more wayward and arbitrary than that of science, if the whole of human history be surveyed. The present is ever growing out of the past, with a vigour and a certainty which never allow the fortunes of the race to be seriously dependent on any individual. Each of us is, morally as well as physically, a birth out of antecedents. From childhood we are tutored in right and wrong, not only by professed teachers, but by all elder persons who are around us. Improper deeds or words of a child are reproved by a servant, or by an elder brother, or even by a stranger, as well as by a parent or a priest. We imbibe moral sentiment, as it were at every pore of our moral nature; nor do we often know from whom we learned to abhor *this* course of conduct and to love *that*. Hence no wise man will claim originality for his moral judgments or religious sentiments. A foolish dogma, a fanciful tenet, may easily be original; but a pure sound truth is more likely to have been old. To prove its novelty is impossible, and certainly could not recommend it: on the contrary, the older we can prove it to have been, the greater its ostensible authority. For these reasons, in the theory of morals and religion, a claim of originality can seldom or never be sustained: in this whole field the question is less what a man has taught than what he has persuaded others. Hundreds of us may have said, truly and wisely: "It is a great pity that Mohammedans, Jews, and Christians of every sect will not unlearn their dissensions, and blend into one religious community." The sentiment must once have been even new; yet its utterance could never have earned praise and distinction. But if any one devoted his life to bring about such union, and succeeded in it, we should undoubtedly regard him as a moral hero; though (as just said) no one *could* succeed, until the fulness of time arrived and the crisis was seized judiciously.

Thus, in discussing the claims put forth for special and indeed exclusive honour to the name of Jesus, we have to consider, not so much what he said, or is said to have said, as what he effected; what impression he actually produced by his life and teaching; what great, noble, abiding results his energies originated and bequeathed. The moment we ask, What are the facts? we seem to be plunged into waves of most uncertain controversy; into discussions of literature unsuitable for short oral treatment. Yet, before the present audience, I may with full propriety claim as admitted that which greatly clears our way. I presume you to know familiarly, that the picture of Jesus in the fourth gospel is essentially irreconcilable with that in the three which precede, and is neither trustworthy nor credible. The three first gospels, taken by themselves, do present a character, a moral picture, sufficiently self-consistent and intelligible to reason about. But our present question (allow me carefully to insist) is NOT, Do we see in Jesus a remarkable man, a gifted peasant, a dogmatist by whom we may profit, whose noble sentiments we may admire or applaud? but rather, Do we find one who dwarfs all others before him? one to whose high superiority sages and prophets must bow; before whom it is reasonable and healthful for those who have a hundredfold of his knowledge and breadth of thought to take the place of little children? Or, at least, Has Europe and the world (as a fact) learned from him what it was not likely to learn without him? Is that TRUE which is dinned into our ears, that Christendom has imbibed *from him* a pure, spiritual, large-hearted, universal religion, adapted to man as man, cementing mankind as a family, and ennobling the individual by a new and living Spirit, unknown to the philosophies, unknown to the priesthoods, untaught by the prophets, before him?

Even if we had no insight as to the comparative value of the several gospels, one broad certainty affords solid ground to plant the foot upon. The positive institutions and active spirit of the first Christian church are notorious and indubitable. On learning what the Apostles established in their Master's name within a few weeks of his death, we know with full certainty *what they had understood him to teach*, what impression he actually produced, what was the real net result of his life and preaching: and this, in fact, is our main question, Now, it is true beyond dispute—it is conceded by every sect of Christians—that in the first Christian church the Levitical ceremonies were maintained with zealous rigour, and that its only visible religious peculiarity consisted in community of goods. The candidate for baptism professed no other creed but that Jesus was Messiah; and the obedience of the disciple to the Master was practically manifested in the sudden renunciation of private property. This ordinance was not, in theory, compulsory; but, while the fervour of faith was new, it was enforced by the public opinion of the church so sharply, as to tempt the richer disciples to hypocrisy. The story of Ananias and Sapphira is full of instruction. They did not wish to alienate *all* their goods, though they were willing to be very liberal. In deference to the prevailing sentiment, they sold property and gave largely to the church; yet were guilty of keeping back *a part* for themselves secretly. For this fraud (according to the legend) they were both struck dead at the voice of Peter! Such a legend could not have arisen, except in a church which regarded absolute Communism as the characteristic Christian virtue. Higher proof is not needed that Jesus established this duty as the touchstone of discipleship: but, in fact, the account in the three gospels tallies herewith perfectly. Jesus there mourns over a rich young man, as refusing the law of PERFECTION, because he hesitates to sell all his goods, give them to the poor, and become a mendicant friar. When his disciples, commenting on the young man's failure to fulfil the test, say: "Lo! we have left all and followed thee: what shall we have therefore?" Jesus in reply promises, that, in reward for having sacrificed to him the gains of their industry and abandoning their relatives, they shall sit upon thrones, and judge the twelve tribes of Israel.

The Jerusalem church was, alone of all churches, founded by the chosen representatives of Jesus on the doctrine of Jesus himself, while the remembrance of that doctrine was fresh. It was a special community, not unlike a "religious order" of modern Europe; and could not be discriminated, by Jews any more than by Romans, from a Jewish sect. In the next century, those who seem to have been its direct successors were called Ebionite heretics by the Gentile Christians. When Paul, who ostentatiously refused to learn anything from the actual hearers of Jesus, had put forth what he calls "his own" gospel—namely, "the mystery that Gentiles were to be fellow-heirs" without Levitical purity—he brought on himself strong opposition, perhaps animosity, from the Christians of Jerusalem, who were the historical fruit of Jesus' own planting. When Paul was in Jerusalem, one of the leaders called his attention to the fact that, while many thousands of Jews were believers, they were "all zealous of the law;" he therefore advised him to pacify their misgivings and suspicions of him, by performing publicly certain Judaical ceremonies. Paul obeyed him: nevertheless, no such conformities could atone for his offence in teaching that Gentiles, while free from the law, were equal to the Jews before God; and Paul to his last day experienced enmity from the zealous members of that church.* His relations to the other Apostles we know by his own account to have been certainly cold. He seems to be personally pointed at in the Epistle of James, as "a vain man," who preaches faith without works; while he himself (as he tells us) publicly attacked Peter at Antioch as a dissembler and weak truckler to Jerusalem bigotry. When, from first to last, the doctrine of the church at Jerusalem was sternly Levitical, it is quite incredible that Jesus ever taught his disciples the religious nullity of Levitical ceremonies and the equality of Gentiles with Jews before God. But why need I *argue* about this, when it is distinctly clear on the face of the narrative? In the book of Acts the idea that "God is no respecter of persons"—or of nations—breaks upon the mind of Peter as a new revelation, and is said to have been imparted by a special vision. It is not pretended that Jesus had taught it; nor does Paul, in any of his controversies against Judaism, dare to appeal to the authority and doctrine of the earthly Jesus as on his side. In fact, in the Sermon on the Mount, as also in a passage of Luke (xvi. 17), Jesus declares that he is not come to destroy the law; and that "Rather shall heaven and earth pass away, than shall one *tittle* of the law fail." I am, of course, aware that Christian theologians would have us believe that Luke is here defective, and that the words in Matthew, "Until all be fulfilled," mean "Until my *death* shall fulfil all the *types*." But this would make Jesus purposely to deceive his disciples by a riddle. This is indeed worse than trifling, and a gratuitous imputation on the teacher's truthfulness. He must have known how he was understood. They supposed him to mean that Levitism was eternal; and he did not correct the impression. It was then the very impression which he designed to make, simply and truthfully; and the disciples, one and all, rightly understood him, and knew it well.

The verse which follows in Matthew clenches the argument; although (I see I must in candour add) I do not believe that Jesus spoke it in exactly this form. Nevertheless, it emphatically shows how the writer interpreted the verse preceding. For he makes Jesus to add: "Wherefore, whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and *shall teach men so*, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." I find myself unable to doubt that these words were written to mean: "Wherefore, one like *Paul*, who breaks the Levitical ceremonies, and teaches the Gentiles to break them, is least in my kingdom; but *James*, and the Apostles in Jerusalem, who do and teach them, are great in my kingdom." The intensity of feeling on this subject was such, that the Jewish Christians easily believed Jesus to have prophetically warned them against Paul's error. Be this as it may, the formula, "break one of these least commandments, and teach men to break it," is in contrast to "fulfilling the law," and distinctly shows that "fulfilling the law," refers to *doing* and *enforcing* even the least commandments.

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* I now believe that there were other graver causes for their great jealousy of Paul.—1884.

The Jerusalem church was the product (and, as far as we know, the only direct product) of the teachings of Jesus. Of its sentiment we have an interesting exhibition in the epistle of James; in whom we see a high and severe moralist, pure and exacting, full of righteous indignation against the oppression of the poor by the rich, and against all haughtiness of wealth. He does not treat all private property as unchristian; but only large property. Evidently no rich man could have seemed venerable to the chief saints in that church. He assumes the guilt of all rich men, and announces misery about to come on them, as does Jesus in the parable of Lazarus: nevertheless, in him all the harshest parts of Jesus' precepts have been softened by the trial of practical life. In fact, this epistle is much in the tone of the very noblest of the Hebrew prophets. As with them, so in him, the moral element is wholly predominant, and nothing ceremonial obtrudes itself. Nay, what is really remarkable, he calls his doctrine the "perfect law of liberty;" so little did those ceremonies oppress him, to which from childhood he had been accustomed. Let due honour be given to this specimen of the first and only genuine Christianity; yet it is difficult to find anything that morally distinguishes it from the teachings of an Isaiah or a Joel. There is certainly a diversity: for the political elements of thought have disappeared, which under the Hebrew monarchy were prominent.

It would be absurd to censure an epistle because it is not a ritual, or to demand in it the fervours of spirituality found in this or that psalm. Nevertheless, in the present connection, I must claim attention to the fact that neither the three gospels nor the epistle of James have ever been in high favour with that

Calvinistic or Augustinian school which most nearly represents Paul to the moderns. To bring out the argument in hand more clearly, allow me to make a short digression. Morality requires both action and sentiment. No reasonable teacher can undervalue either: yet some moral teachers press more on action, and are said to preach duty and work; and even make a duty of sentiment, laying down as a *command* that we shall love God, love our neighbours, love not ease, love not self. Other teachers endeavour to excite, foster, and develop just sentiment, and trust that it will generate just action: possibly they even run into the error of shunning definite instruction as to what action is good. Finite and one-sided as we are, two schools naturally grow up among teachers, who may be classed as the preachers of duty and the preachers of sentiment: but perhaps, if the question be distinctly proposed to the ablest men of either school, "Do we learn action from sentiment, or sentiment from action?" they would alike reply (as in substance does Aristotle) that both processes necessarily co-exist. From childhood upward, right action promotes right feeling, and right feeling generates or heightens right action. There is no real or just collision of the two schools. Nevertheless, as a fact of human history easily explained, the preaching of duty and of outward action gains everywhere an early and undue ascendency, perhaps especially where morals and religion are taught by law, which deals in command and threat. The rude man and the child are subjected to rule more or less arbitrary; and it is only when intellect rises in a nation or in an individual that the spiritual side of morals receives its appropriate attention. In Greek history, we know the fact in the philosophy of Socrates and Plato. Among the Hebrews, a secular increase of spirituality in the highest teachers will probably be conceded by critics of every school to have gone on from the time of the judge Samuel to the writer from whom came the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah. The characteristic difference of the Greek and the Hebrew is this: that, however spiritual the Greek morality might be, it seldom blended with religion; and (with exceptions perhaps only to be found under Hebrew influences, as at Alexandria) the moral affections found no place in religion at all. Now it has been recently asserted by a Theist, that it is to JESUS that we owe that regeneration of religion, which makes it begin and grow *from within*. He is not (it is said) "a mere teacher of pure ethics;" but "his work has been in the *heart*. He has transformed the Law into the Gospel.

He has changed the bondage of the alien for the liberty of the sons of God. He has glorified virtue into holiness, religion into piety, and duty into love." Hence it is inferred that his "coming was to the life of humanity what regeneration is to the life of the individual."*

Deep as is my sympathy with the writer from whom I quote, I am constrained to say that every part of the statement appears to me historically incorrect. It does, in the first place, violent injustice to the Hebrews who preceded Jesus. Did *he* first "glorify virtue into holiness"? Nay, from the very beginning of Hebraism this was done—at least as early as Samuel. Did *he* first "glorify religion into piety"? Is there then no piety in the 42nd Psalm? in the 63rd? in the 27th? in the 23rd? Nay, I might ask; from what utterances of Jesus can piety be learned by the man who cannot learn it from the Psalms? Holiness and piety appear to me to have been taught and exemplified quite as effectively before Jesus as since. Surely in the *religion* of the psalmists *piety* dominated, as much as in Fenelon or in the poet Cowper. But finally I have to ask, "Did Jesus glorify duty into love?" And, in order to reply, I turn to the three gospels, as containing our best account of what he taught.

A phenomenon there very remarkable is the severity with which Jesus enforces as duty the most painful renunciations: and the contempt with which he rejects anything short of immediate obedience to his arbitrary demands. I know not whether the narrators have overcoloured him; but they give us, on the one side, examples of prompt obedience to the command, "Follow me:" first, in Andrew and Peter; next, in James and John; who "immediately left the ship *and their father*, and followed him." This is afterwards praised as highly meritorious. On the other side, when Jesus says to a man, "Follow me," and receives the reply, "Lord, suffer me first *to go and bury my father*," Jesus retorts: "Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. Another also said, Lord, I will follow thee, but let me *first go and bid them farewell* which are at home in my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

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* I quote from the striking treatise of my friend Miss Cobbe, called "Broken Lights." The whole protest against M. Renan, of which the words above are the summary, should be read to understand their relation. I am authorized to say that she has not even the remotest wish to make honour to Jesus a part of *religion:* she intended to write as a *historian* only.

The peremptory command to abandon their parents, not bury a dead father, and not even say a word of farewell to the living, is perhaps a credulous exaggeration of the writer; yet it is in close harmony with the whole account, and with the declaration, "He that hateth not his father and mother, and wife and children, cannot be my disciple:" for evidently the following of Jesus, as interpreted and enforced by himself, involved an abandonment (perhaps to starvation) of these near relatives. It is not my purpose to dwell now on the right or wrong of such precepts, but on the imperious tone in which they are imposed *from without*, not the slightest attempt being made to recommend them to the heart or understanding. Again, in perfect harmony with the same is the reply, already adduced, of Jesus to the rich young man, who comes to ask, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" The opportunity was excellent to set forth that no outward actions could bring eternal life, but that such life was an interior and divine state, to be sought by love and faithfulness. Instead of spiritual instruction, Jesus gives a crushing arbitrary command: "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me." Does such a teacher build *from within* by implanting Love? Does he act upon Love at all, or rather on selfish Ambition? He deals in hard duty and fierce threat; commands too high, and motives too low; thoughts of reward; promises of power; salvation by works; investment of money for returns beyond the grave; prudential adoption of virtue, which may soften judgment, win promotion, deliver from prospective prison and hell fire: topics which at best are elements of Law, as opposed to Gospel. In the opinion of an increasing fraction of the most enlightened Christians, the most noxious element in the popular creed is the eternal Hell: the stronghold of this doctrine is in the discourses of Jesus. But what of Faith? If Faith be a purely spiritual movement, which cleaves to Goodness and Truth for its own sake, and without regard to selfish interests, it is hard to say in what part of the three gospels it is found. In the mind of Jesus all actions seem to stand in the closest relation to the thoughts of *punishment* or *reward* on a great future day. To lose one's soul means, to be sentenced when that day shall come: cutting off a sin means, escaping mutilated from a future hell. In a religion practically moulded on these discourses, calculation of what we shall hereafter *get* by present obedience inheres as a primary essence. The only faith which Jesus extols, is, faith to work miracles, and faith that he is Messiah and can work them. Inquiry is frowned down and sighed over as unbelief. Power to forgive sin is claimed by him; and, when this is reproved as impious in a human teacher, the claim is marvellously justified by identifying forgiveness with cure of bodily disease. Add to this the grant of miraculous powers to the Seventy, and a delegation of power to forgive is made out at which Protestants may well shudder. In another place (Luke vii. 4, 5) Jesus declares forgiveness of sin to be earned by personal affection to himself.*

Luke has in some parts added softer touches to Jesus, and gives us two fine parables which it is astonishing that Matthew and Mark omit, while they retail so many that are monotonous: yet even in Luke I seek in vain for anything calculated to implant in the heart a sense of freedom; to excite willing service; or to cherish spiritual desire, gratitude and tranquil love, careless of other reward than love itself. In fact, Luke is sometimes harsher than Matthew. Thus, in vi. 20, "Blessed be *ye poor*, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are *ye that hunger now*, for ye shall be filled. . . But *woe unto you that are rich; for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full; for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now; for ye shall mourn and weep*." So indiscriminate and thoughtless are devotees, that such doctrine meets with the same theoretic glorification as the essentially different version of Matthew: "Blessed are the poor *in spirit*. . . Blessed are ye who hunger and thirst *after righteousness*." If Matthew be correct and Luke wrong, Luke has foisted upon Jesus curses against rich and mirthful men, in contrast to the blessings on poverty and weeping: but if the curses came from the lips of Jesus, Luke gives the opposite clauses justly; in which case Matthew has improved monkish into spiritual sentiment. It would be a hard task to prove Luke's version out of harmony with the constant doctrines of Jesus. To borrow Calvinistic phraseology, and (if my memory serves me) the very words of a Pauline spiritualist: "The three gospels may be read in the churches till doomsday, without converting a single soul." The spiritual side of Christianity, inherited from the Hebrew psalmists, *not* from Jesus, was diffused beyond Judæa, first by the Jewish synagogues, next by the school of Paul, to whom the school of Jesus was in fixed opposition, preaching works and the law, while Paul preached the Spirit and faith. "Though I give all my goods to feed the poor," says Paul, "and give my body to be burned, and have not charity, I am nothing." How vast the contrast here to the doctrine of Jesus: "Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and *shall inherit eternal life*." To make ascetic sacrifices for the honour of Jesus was indeed a surpassing merit in his eyes, unless the most important discourses, even in these three gospels, extravagantly belie him. I am unable to discover on what just ground the opinion stands that the character of Jesus is less harsh, and his precepts less sourly austere than those of John the Baptist. Little as we are told of the latter (all of which is honourable), the two must have had close similarities. For it is a fact that Apollos is spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles as "instructed in *the way of the Lord*, and fervent in spirit, and teaching diligently *the things of the Lord*," while he "knew only the baptism of John." So also Paul falls in with "certain disciples" at Ephesus, who pass as Christians; yet he presently discovers that they also know only John's baptism. It seems therefore evident, that the two schools had nothing essential to divide them, and were intimately alike. When, on the other hand, the sharp opposition of the Pauline doctrine to that of James and the church of Jesus at Jerusalem is duly estimated, some may think that certain words put into the mouth of John the Baptist will become less untrue if changed as follows: "I indeed *and Jesus* baptize you with water unto repentance and poverty; but *Paul* shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." Be that as it may—give as little weight as you please to Paul's strong points—press as heavily as you will on his weak side, out of which came the worst part of Calvinism—the fact remains, that Jesus did not teach Christianity to the Gentiles, or declare them admissible to his church without observing Mosaism; and that to the Jews themselves he preached merely severe precepts, ethical or monkish, with a minimum of what can be called Gospel;—precepts, on which a religious order might be founded, but totally unsuitable for a world-wide religion.

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* I am bound to add that, on special grounds, I do not believe this account in Luke. I treat the matter elsewhere.

When people calmly tell me that Jesus first established the brotherhood of man, the equality of races, the nullity of ceremonies; that he overthrew the narrowness of Judaism; that he found a national, but left a universal religion; found a narrow-minded ceremonial and originated a spiritual principle, I can do nothing but reply that every one of these statements is groundless and contrary to fact. What his disciples never understood him to teach, he certainly did not teach effectually. It is childish to reply that the fault lay in the stupidity of the twelve Apostles. What! could not Jesus speak as plainly as Paul did? Surely, the more stupid the hearer, the more plainly the teacher is bound to speak. If Jesus *had* so spoken, never could want of spirituality in the hearer have made the words unintelligible. Did only the spiritual understand Paul when he proclaimed the overthrow of ceremonies? Could the most stupid of mortals have failed to understand Jesus also, if he had avowed that the Levitical ordinances were a nullity and Gentiles the religious equals of Jews? I may seem to insult men's intellect by pressing these questions; but do not *they* rather insult *our* intellect? For they would have us believe Jesus to have originated doctrines which are the very opposite of all that his actual hearers and authorized expounders established as his, before there was time for his teaching to fade from their memory, and to be modified by novelties supervening.

I have called the primitive church of Jerusalem the only direct product of Jesus. Do I deny that Jesus bore any part *at all* in setting up the creed known in Europe as Christianism? I wish I could wholly deny it. Gladly would I relieve his memory of *all* responsibility for dogmas, whence proceed far more darkness and weakness of mind, confusion, bitterness, and untractable enmities, than his moral teaching can ever dispel; dogmas which as effectually break up good men into hostile sects, with fixed walls of partition between them, as ever did the ceremonialism which he is falsely imagined to have destroyed. But, hard as it is to know how much of the gospels is historical, I suppose that no one for three centuries at least has doubted that Jesus avowed himself to be MESSIAH, at first privately, at last ostentatiously; and was put to death for the avowal. If so much be historical, we are on firm ground. There is then no room for transcendental philosophies and imaginative theories, as to what authority and honour Jesus was claiming. The Jews of that day familiarly understood that Messiah was to be a Prince from Heaven, who should rule and judge on earth. As to the great outlines of Messiah's character and power, manifestly there was no dispute. If the popular notions on this subject were wrong, the first business with Jesus must have been to set them right. But he never discourses against them, nor shows alarm lest he be thought to claim supernatural dignity and lordship: nor could his riding triumphantly on the ass, amid shouts of "Hosanna to the Son of David!" have been intended to discourage the belief that he was to exercise *temporal* as well as spiritual royalty. The learned and the vulgar were in full agreement that Messiah was to be a supreme Prince and Teacher to Israel, Judge and Lord of all nations: but the rulers regarded it as impious, criminal, and treasonable to aspire to this dignity while unable to exhibit some miraculous credentials. The popular belief concerning Messiah was gathered, not only from our canonical prophets, but also from the book called "The Wisdom of Solomon" (which was in the Greek Bible of Paul and other Hellenist Jews), and perhaps from the book of Enoch, which Jude and Peter quote reverentially, and Jude ascribes to Enoch, the seventh from Adam. With the discovery of that book early in this century a new era for the criticism of Christianity ought to have begun; for it looks like the most direct fountain of the Messianic creed. The book of Mormon does not stand alone as a manifest fiction which had power to generate a new religion: the book of Enoch seems to be a parallel. A recent German critic has given the following summary of its principal contents—"It not only comprizes the scattered allusions of the Old Testament in one grand picture of unspeakable bliss, unalloyed virtue, and unlimited knowledge: it represents the Messiah as both King and Judge of the world, who has the decision over everything on earth and in heaven. He is the Son of Man who possesses righteousness; since the God of all spirits has elected him, and since he has conquered all by righteousness in eternity. He is also the Son of God, the Elected one, the Prince of Righteousness. He is gifted with that wisdom which knows all secret things. The spirit in all its fulness is poured out upon him. His glory lasts to all eternity. He shares the throne of God's majesty: kings and princes will worship him. and will invoke his mercy."* So much from the book of Enoch; which undoubtedly was widely believed among the contemporaries of Jesus. How much of the self-glorifying language put into the mouth of Jesus was actually uttered by him it is impossible to know. There is always room for the opinion that only later credulity ascribed this and that to him—that (for instance) he did not really speak the parable about the sheep and goats, representing himself as the Supreme Judge who awards heaven or hell to every human soul. But it remains, that this parable distinctly shows the nature of the dignity which Jesus was supposed to claim in calling himself Son of Man; and, even if we arbitrarily pare away from his discourses this and other details in deference to Unitarian surmise, we still cannot get rid of what pervades the whole narrative, that Jesus from the beginning adopted a tone of superhuman authority and obtrusion of his own personal greatness, with the title "Son of Man," allusive both to Daniel and to the book of Enoch. According to Daniel, one like unto a Son of Man will come in the clouds of heaven to receive eternal dominion over all nations. It is impossible to doubt, that, in the mind of those to whom Jesus spoke, the character of Messiah implied an overshadowing supremacy, a high leadership over Israel, and hereby over the Gentiles, who were to come and sit at Israel's feet: a religious and, as it were, princely pre-eminence, which only one mortal could receive, who by it was raised immeasurably above all others. If he did not intend to claim this, it was obviously his first duty to *dis*claim it, and to warn all against false, dangerous, or foolish conceptions of Messiah; to protest that Messiah was only a teacher, not a prince, not a divine lawgiver, not a supreme judge sitting on the throne of God and disposing of men's eternal destinies. Nay, why claim the title Messiah at all, if it could only suggest falsehood? Since he sedulously fostered the belief that he was Messiah, without attempting to define the term, or guide the public mind, he could only be understood, and must have wished to be understood, to present himself as Messiah in the popular, notorious sense. If he was really this, honour him as such. If his claim was delusive, he cannot be held guiltless.

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* I quote from a summary of the book of Enoch by the German theologian Kalisch, given in Bishop Colenso's Appendix to his 4th volume on the Pentateuch.

Every high post has its own besetting sin, which must be conquered by him who is to earn any admiration. A finance minister, who pilfers the treasury, can never be honoured as a hero, whatever the merits of his public measures. A statesman or prince, entrusted with the supreme executive power, ruins his claims to veneration if he use that power violently to overthrow the laws. Such as is the crime of a statesman who usurps a despotism, such is the guilt of a religious teacher who usurps lordship over the taught and aggrandizes himself. It is a bottomless gulf of demerit, swallowing up all possible merit, and making silence concerning him our kindest course, if only his panegyrists allow us to be silent. A teacher who exalts himself into our Lord and Saviour and Judge, leaves to his hearers no reasonable choice between two extremes of conduct. Whoso is not with him is against him. For we must either submit frankly to his claims, and acknowledge ourselves little children—*abhor the idea of criticizing* him or his precepts, and in short become morally annihilated in his presence—or, on the opposite, we cannot help seeing him to have fallen into something worse than ignominy.

I digress to remark, that a teacher supposed by us to be the infallible arbiter of our eternity would detain our minds for ever in a puerile state if he taught dogmatically, not to say imperiously. If he aimed to elicit our own powers of judgment, and not to crush us into submissive imbecility, the method which Socrates carried to an extreme appears alone suited to the object; namely, to refrain from expressing his own decisions, but lay before the hearers the material of thought half-prepared, and claim of them to combine it into some conclusion themselves. In fact, this is fundamentally the mode in which the Supremely Wise, who inhabits this infinite world, trains our minds and souls. His greatness does not oppress our faculties, because it is ever silent from without. Displaying before us abundantly the materials of judgment, he elicits our powers; never commanding us to become little children, but always inviting our minds to grow up into manhood. But, if there were also an opposite side of teaching healthful to us—if it were well to start from dogmas guaranteed to us from heaven, which it is impiety to canvas—then the matter of first necessity would be, that the uttered decrees to which we are to submit should be free from all enigma, all extravagance of hyperbole, all parable, dark allusion, and hard metaphor, all apparent self-contrariety; and, moreover, that we should have no uncertainty what were the teacher's precise words, no mere mutilated reports and inconsistent duplicates, but a reliable genuine copy of every utterance on which there is to be no criticism. To sum up, I will say: Nothing can be less suited *to minister the Spirit* and train the powers of the human soul, than to be subject to a superhuman dictation of truth; and nothing could be more unlike *a divine law of the letter*, (supposing for a moment such a law to be possible,) than the incoherent, hyperbolic, enigmatic, inconsistent fragments of discourses given to us unauthoritatively as teachings of Jesus.

But I return to my main subject. I have shewn what conclusions seem inevitable, so soon as we cease to believe that Jesus is the celestial Prince Messiah of the book of Enoch, popularly expected in his day. To lay stress on his possession of this or that gentle and beautiful virtue is quite away from the purpose. Let it be allowed that Luke has rightly added this and that soft touch to the picture in Matthew and Mark. Let it be granted that the progressive as well as the traditional side of the Jerusalem church came direct from Jesus himself. Even so, whether any of the actual virtues of European Christians have been kindled from fires which really burnt in Jesus, it appears to me impossible to know. The heart of Paul gushed with the tenderest and warmest love, and he believed *Christ* to be its source. But the Christ whom he loved to glorify was not the Christ of our books, which did not yet exist; nor a Christ reported to him by the Apostles, to whom he studiously refused to listen; but the Christ whom he made out in the Messianic Psalms, in parts of Isaiah, in the apocryphal book called Wisdom, and perhaps also in the book of Enoch. With such sources of meditation and information open, the personal and bodily existence of Jesus was thought superfluous by a number of Christians considerable enough to earn denunciations in the epistles of John. A great and good man, Theodore Parker, tells me that it would take a Jesus to invent a Jesus. I reply, that, though to invent a Jesus was undoubtedly difficult, to colour a Jesus was very easy. The colouring drawn from a suffering Messiah was superimposed on Jesus by the perpetual meditations of the churches, which, after he had disappeared, sought the Scriptures diligently, NOT to discover whether Jesus was Messiah, which was already an axiom, BUT to discover *what*, and what sort of a person, Messiah *was*. According as the inquirers studied more in one or in another book, the conception of Messiah came out different; and here we have an obvious explanation of the varieties of portrait in different gospels. The first disciples, who thus by prophetical* studies supplemented the dry outlines which alone could be communicated by the actual hearers of Jesus, would naturally affix to him many traits not strictly human, nor laudable except on the theory of his superhuman character.

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* To my personal knowledge, this is the systematic practice of Pauline Christians in the present day. They read of Jesus in the Psalms, in the Prophets, in the "types" of Leviticus, in the Song of Solomon, in the Proverbs,—anywhere, in short,—with more zeal and pleasure than in the three gospels. A free instinct guides them to feed on less stubborn material.

Nevertheless, in a church exalted by moral enthusiasm and self-sacrifice, in which the highest spirits were truly devoted to practical holiness, it is to be expected that whatever is most beautiful and tender, pure and good, in the traits of character which in Isaiah or elsewhere were believed to belong to Messiah, would be eagerly appropriated to Jesus, as they evidently were by Paul. Some of these would be likely to tinge often-repeated narratives; so that, although none could invent the outline portrait of Jesus, no difficulty appears in the way of a theory, that the moral sentiment of the church has cast a soft halo over a character perhaps rather stern and ambitious, than discriminating, wise, or tender.

We cannot recover lost history. Into the narratives and discourses of Jesus so much of legendary error has crept that we may write or wrangle about him for ever: Paul is a palpable and positive certainty. In what single moral or religious quality Jesus was superior to Paul, I find myself unable to say. Is it really a duty incumbent on each of us to decide such questions? Why must the task of awarding the palm of spiritual greatness among men be foisted into *religion?*

It is a fact on the surface of history, that Paul, more than any one else, overthrew ceremonialism. Hereby he founded a religion more expansive than that of Isaiah, and, in his fond belief, expansive as the human race, as the children of God. He was not the first Jew to propound the nullity of ceremonies. If time allowed, that topic might admit instructive amplification. The controversy against ceremonies was inevitable, and, with or without him, must have been fought out. What he effected, let us thankfully record; but God does not allow us to owe our souls to any one man, as though he were a fountain of life. It is an evil thing to call ourselves a man's followers, to express devotion to him, and blazon forth his name. Every teacher is largely the product of his age: whatever light and truth he imparts, the glory of it is due to the Father of Light alone, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift. Any glory for it would be inexpressibly painful to a *true-hearted* prophet: I mean, for instance, to one true-hearted as Paul. *He* had no wish to be called Master, Master. *He* could not bear to hear any one say, "I am of Paul." "Who then is Paul, and who Apollos, but ministers by whom ye have believed?" What! when a man believes himself to be the channel by which it has pleased the Unseen Lord to pour out some portion of hidden truth for the feeding of hungry souls, can such a one bear to be *praised* and *thanked* for his ministrations? Nay, in proportion as he knows himself to speak God's truth by the impulse of God's spirit, in the same proportion he feels his own personality to be annihilated, and he breathes out an intense desire that *God* in him may be glorified, but the *man* be forgotten. I say then, let not us thwart and counteract such yearnings of the simple-hearted instructor. Hear Paul himself further on this matter. "Let no man glory in *men;* for all things are yours: whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours." He means that the collective children of God are the *end*, for whom God has provided teachers as *tools* and *instruments.* But this is not all. In proportion as the teachers are elevated, the taught become unable to judge of their relative rank in honour. Paul therefore forbad the attempt, and deprecated praise. "With me," he continues, "it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment; yea, I judge not my own self, but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come; who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of hearts; and then shall every man have (his own) praise of God." What else did he mean to say but: Think not to distribute awards among those to whom you look up. To graduate the claims of equals and inferiors is generally more than a sufficient task. Leave God to pass his awards on those who are spiritually above you; who possibly, like Paul, may receive your praise as painful, and be wholly unconcerned at your blame.—The glorifying of religious teachers has hitherto never borne any fruit but canonizations and deifications, "voluntary humility and worshipping of messengers," vain competitions and rival sects; stagnation in the letter, quenching of the Spirit.

THE BIGOT AND THE SKEPTIC,

WHAT IS THEIR *EUTHANASIA*.

[1865.]

THE epithets Bigot and Skeptic are made for rebuke. No one covets them. To bestow them hastily is a weakness of the impatient, irritable or foolish, yet each of them indicates a real error of mind; a defect which besets every one of us, and deserves to be sharply pointed at. Analysis seems to lead to the following statement. Two propositions may be safely laid down:

I.—Truth is wholesome to us mentally and morally; is eminently precious, especially in religion, and must be bought at all sacrifice, whether of prejudice or of material advantage.

II.—Truth in religion is extremely difficult of attainment.

Of these propositions the former is learned *from within*, by Intuition, by a choice of the soul, just as we know that disinterestedness is better than selfishness and kindness than malice. But the latter is learned *from without*, by Observation, Experience, Testimony, and History. The former, like other fundamental principles of Ethics, may be called eternally true, since it co-exists with the ethical mind. The latter is true only during the intellectual infancy of man, and like other *empirical* truths may wear itself out by change of circumstances and improved culture.

The Skeptic errs on the side of forgetting or denying the former, while familiarly aware of the latter. The Bigot is ignorant of the latter, while sometimes possessed to the bottom of his soul by the former. But we must join *both* propositions, if we would be wise. It belongs only to those whose information and thought is quite narrow, to be unaware how very inadequate in every age and country mere Goodness is, to save men from the most irrational, pernicious, and degrading religious errors. Bitter at first is the experience, to learn of intense contrarieties of opinion concerning religion, where we should least expect them. Agreement is found, neither among the learned nor among the unlearned. Rabbis and Theologians, "babes and sucklings," those so devoted to piety as to study nothing else, and those who with grave religiousness join extensive knowledge and worldly wisdom—yet on religion come into hopeless collision, too often unfriendly or bitter. It is irrational to deny that the attainment of *Truth* is difficult, when we see good, well-informed, able men inquire after it, yet remain so much at variance. Undoubtedly by such experience a light hostile to Bigotry has been widely shed abroad, so that this fault of character is perpetually on the decrease. We more and more learn to be gentle of judgment toward erring individuals, even if we cannot learn diffidence of our hereditary creed; and instead of moralizing over the wickedness of *miscreants* (*i.e.* misbelievers), we learn to rejoice that under every religion, however false, good men and women are found in great numbers. But after this conviction has taken root, the question recurs, "What then is Truth? or how related to us?" We may, as one mode of cutting the knot, conclude, that Truth is unattainable, at least in religion; therefore it cannot be a natural want, it cannot conduce to our perfection, and it is unwise to enquire further. To adopt this conclusion, is commonly called Skepticism, by a strange inversion of etymology. A Skeptic ought to mean, one addicted to consider, to study, to inquire, yet we use the word to mean, one who deliberately *ceases to search* for truth, one who believes that inquiry is useless.

Only one reasonable alternative presents itself: for it cannot be called reasonable for *each* in turn to assume a complacent confidence that *his own* hereditary creed is true, when he sees how widespread is error among the well-informed and well-intentioned. The reasonable alternative is, to consider whether any discoverable *errors of procedure* have led to so extensive error of result. And here great light is instantly thrown on the subject by the parallel history of the human mind in other branches of knowledge. When we see a wide and pervading difference of opinion in Science, we make sure that either *First Principles* have been assumed too hastily, or erroneous *Laws of Proof* have been adopted; and the history of Science before Galileo establishes beyond dispute that to these faults were due the barren controversies of the preceding ages. What Thucydides complained concerning History was true of nearly all Science: "the research of truth was to the majority unpainstaking." Through deficient experience, all underrated the difficulty. Even those who spent their lives in thought, took up with a light hand and resolved with a light heart problems of the most complex and enormous magnitude, utterly unconscious how presumptuous they were. No man was saved from great error by vast powers: for the greater his powers, so much the harder was the task to which he set himself, and so much the wider the grasp of his ambition. When foreign nations inherited Greek thought, individual Greek philosophers were made "authorities," and deference to these became a new mischief. Of these the great and good Aristotle had the most recent, the widest and the most lasting sway; and no progress in Truth was possible, until reverence for him (one may almost say) was trodden underfoot. Men were born to help each other to Truth, but not to dictate Truth; hence he who makes any one a dictator makes him a nuisance, sets him up as a necessary mark of attack, makes it a duty to hurl him (as it were) into the dust; that is, to exhibit his errors without tenderness; to dwell on his weaker side; to hold him up to apparent dishonour, until the spell of his name shall have been effectually broken.

Besides the extreme haste with which the old speculators jumped at their general doctrines, and the readiness with which they accepted as fact inaccurate or ill-attested statements, a fundamentally vicious mode of reasoning was very prevalent, which we might now describe as a confounding of Sciences. Such an error is it, to offer an ethical demonstration of an astronomical doctrine, or a metaphysical proof in optics. The limits of the Sciences were in appearance strongly marked in the age of Socrates, and one might have expected from their ample nomenclature exemption from this one error; yet it was never rooted out in the whole period from Aristotle to Bacon.

One thing can nevertheless be said. Philosophy in its wildest days was raised immensely above the fatuity of the contemporaneous national Religions. It did not watch the flight of birds, nor listen to omens. It did not give credence to dreams, nor divine by lightnings. It did not open its ear or eye to mystical magicians. It did not burn or drown witches. It did not imagine sleepwalkers, or other persons who were in an abnormal state of mind, to be divinely commissioned revealers of truth. Fix on what era in the past or country you choose, the philosopher is always found sounder of mind and nearer to right procedure than the priest or augur who stood by his side.

If we turn to the old religions of India, we find only what we might expect,—the premature speculations of antiquity overcrusted with a vast growth of wild poetry, of credulity, of blundering mistake, and of craft. If we could quite clear away all that can be called corruption or perversion, and reach the original doctrines of those whom we must believe to have been great and wise men in their day, we make sure that we should find them infected by the errors necessarily incident to early philosophy, which inevitably mingles itself with religion. While men have very imperfect notions as to *what constitutes Proof*, and are unaware of the delusions which beset us in trying to decipher *supersensible Truth*, they cannot avoid errors of great magnitude. Hereupon the question presses, whether an Indian or Moslem can retort the same remark upon Europe, upon Christendom. What are the principles of *proof* on which Christianity stands? Were its first preachers better taught in the foundations of philosophy and in the logic which is necessary to avoid delusive error than the most enlightened of their contemporaries? Certainly,—undeniably—they were not. Open the New Testament and read its very first pages: what do you find? A belief in *dreams*, such that if any man now professed it, he would be thought to be suffering under softening of the brain; a readiness to receive *hearsay* so absolute, that the writer does not imagine in the reader any need to learn who the writer is, how he gained his information, and on what basis he rests.

Moreover the writers of New Testament narratives do not profess to be divinely informed or divinely shielded from mistake of fact: that idea is a pure invention of ecclesiastics. Indeed "Luke" in his four verses of Preface, tells us distinctly that he has taken pains to trace things accurately from their sources. It may not be amiss to dwell a moment on his words. He says: "Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to compile a narrative of the things fully believed among us, even as those *handed them down* to us, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having accurately attended to everything *from above* [*i.e.* from the earliest sources] to write to thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of the things in which thou hast been catechized." So much is in the Greek of an educated Asiatic, and very superior to that of the rest of the book, which is on a par with that of Matthew and Mark, sometimes identical with them. The very word *catechized*, (that is, taught in a class) shows that the Christian Church was no longer in its first age, and the writer clearly informs us that *tradition*, apparently oral, was the basis on which the written narratives were founded. He claims no higher *authority* than had the many compilers who have perished (or perhaps exist and are called Apocryphal). He rests his credibility on his alledged accuracy of research. Thus he implicitly disavows miraculous sources. As to the accuracy to which he lays claim, his opening chapter shows how lax was his standard. Surely he knew that the "eye-witnesses and ministers of the word" could not give *testimony* about the miraculous birth of Jesus and his infancy; yet that goes for nothing with him. The same may be said of everything which is *intended for historical writing* in the New Testament; that is, in the Four Gospels and the Acts. Not one of the writers shows himself aware, that in narrating events which he supposes to have moved Earth and Heaven, and to concern intimately the eternal state of every man, any greater security against delusion is requisite, than if he were telling a campaign of Cæsar or a discourse of Socrates; while in fact he offers no such evidence as would prove to a jury an ordinary event, on the truth of which an estate of a hundred pounds were at stake. Not one of them seems at all aware that to believe *on mere hearsay* marvels and mysteries alledged to be divine, is of all things most prolific of pernicious religious error. Apparitions and messages of angels, and other things wholly supernatural do not appear to these writers to require any definite and clear attestation, or, one may even say, any *attestation* at all. Not one of them ever says that he himself saw any of these marvels, or thinks it necessary to give us a hint as to his informant, or to fix his own relation of time and place to that of which he is telling.

All the ablest critics now recognize that the three first gospels presuppose earlier documents from which they borrow in common: thus not one of the three belongs to the first age. Now it is quite incredible, that Jesus should come down from heaven to speak *to mankind* the words of God, and take no pains to let us know surely what those words are; should leave us *to guess* who wrote the fragmentary compilations which have come down to us,—with what means of knowledge, and with what security against error, credulity or fraud. Yet by writers, who in other respects also are evidently credulous, we are introduced to a divine messenger utterly careless to give us reasons for trusting the genuineness of the words imputed to him.

In these phenomena we have a sufficient explanation of the enormous and painful diversities of opinion concerning religion. Nothing else is possible, while lax notions of *proof* prevail. In fact, they meet us at every turn, the moment an attempt is made to converse on religion. Few, very few, seem to imagine, that it at all concerns them to know when and by whom the books were written on which they rest so confidently. Very many suppose that the truth of tales concerning past events can be ascertained by their being acceptable to our inward feelings. *Inward* proof of *outer* facts is the same delusive logic as would establish some astronomical assertion by Ethics or Rhetoric.

Protestants are not alone implicated in vicious logic. Protestants indeed *talk* most of the Bible, especially of the New Testament, the Christian side of it: but Catholics, Roman or Greek, equally have no other foundation. Without it, their imaginary Church Authority hangs in the air. The very first step of the Roman Catholic is to claim supremacy for Peter; his second, to claim for the Pope the succession to that supremacy. But until he has proved the credibility (nay, the truth) of the Four Gospels, he cannot appeal to them for his very few favourite texts, and he has nothing at all to offer as a basis for belief. Will he appeal to his modern miracles,—of St. Januarius, of the winking Virgin and others? But they stand in no logical relation to the New Testament. If a picture do really wink, if co-agulated blood does melt, if paralytics really are restored by the touch of a bit of wood or bone,—a wide chasm remains between such phenomena and the Catholic doctrines; many of which moreover we justly repudiate on moral and intellectual grounds, which are their proper test.

It must however be admitted, that the Catholic, who receives these modern miracles with so easy faith, earns thereby a right to assail the Protestant for being intensely incredulous concerning modern miracles, while he is credulous on a par with the Catholic concerning ancient miracles;—miracles in ages and countries notoriously uncritical,—unsuspicious of human delusion,—unversed in physical science,—believing diseases to imply indwelling devils,—ready to accept tales of magic, of ghosts, of dreams, of angelic apparitions. That such was their intellectual state, is undeniable. Naturally therefore, with those who have not time nor taste for the study of the Biblical literature, modern incredulity turns chiefly against *miracles as such*,—against the very idea of Supernaturalism.

It cannot be denied, that with all who study material science the tide runs very strongly in the direction of disbelieving *à priori* ALL stories of miracle. Of this the maintainers of religious miracles take advantage, by representing the disbelief to rest on an abstract and arbitrary philosophy, which, if not atheistic, yet virtually limits the power of the Most High, and subjects Him to the laws of matter. Such a representation disguises the true position and history of cultivated thought. If man NOW disbelieve miracle *à priori*, it is because of the results *à posteriori* of multifarious and elaborate investigation. The case against religious miracle stands on just the same logical footing as that against ghosts. Every sensible and well-informed man turns deaf ears to a ghost story, refusing to waste time over it. He has an *à priori* disbelief which it is scarcely possible to overcome. The unplausibilities which offend him are in part intrinsic to most of the stories; such as, that a disembodied spirit should appear in the clothes of a deceased person. But beyond such matters of detail, we have endless proof how great delusion has been in such tales, how prone human nature is to the delusion; how capricious, how useless, how impotent are these apparitions. From the countless disproofs *in the past*, we earn a great incredibility as to like things *in the future;* so that the belief resting on things known *à posteriori* acts *a priori.* All this applies exactly to religious miracle. The argument was stated with the greatest clearness by the eminent metaphysician whose name has been attached to it. DAVID HUME argued: Since we are forced to reject as vain a huge mass of religious prodigy, because each Religion denounces all others as unsound, the facts prove undeniably *the proneness of human nature* to such foolish and pernicious beliefs. Of the great national religions *all but one* MUST be false; and all may be false, so far as they pretend to miracle. All pretended testimony to such a thing is exposed to extreme suspicion, so soon as that proclivity of mankind is discovered. Nay, the evidence accumulated in the past against religious miracle is such, as at length to justify us in rejecting any fresh story, without the trouble of sifting each in detail.—To pretend that this argument of David Hume is the same in type as that of a man living on the Equator, who says: "Water can never become solid; *for, that is against my experience,*" is utter misrepresentation. As well pretend that the argument against Ghosts is simply: "There are no Ghosts; *for I have never seen any.*" Nay; but—"Ghost stories in plenty have been believed; but all which it has been possible to bring to a practical and judicial test, have thereupon melted into emptiness. *Therefore* no new story of the same kind carries moral weight with it." Change Ghost Story into Religious Miracle, and you have Hume's real argument. He was a Theist. No atheism, no undue limitation of Divine Power, has any place in his words.

That the students of Physics, who have proof so vast and various of the uniformity of natural law, are apt to state their argument against religious miracle with a harshness beyond what is wise and prudent in the controversy, need not be denied.

We have no business with the question what the Supreme Power is *able* to do, nor whether any *imaginable* testimony could prove a miracle. We have a right to abide by certain facts. The intense credulity of mankind, their vehement love of the marvellous, is proved on the greatest scale, in all ages, over all areas, and in all stages of civilization hitherto attained. Therefore whenever (from whatever cause) an alledged miracle cannot be looked into more nearly, the tale carries with it no moral weight. The Christian and Jewish miracles are not attested by eyewitnesses nor even by contemporaries. When we get an undeniably authentic book in which a writer, as Paul or James or Isaiah or Jeremiah addresses his contemporaries concerning things personally known to them all, we find nothing attested that a modern inquirer can recognize as miraculous.

Neither is this all. Immense experience shows, that where *moral* reasons of the intensest kind might seem to call for interference with *physical* law, yet in countless known cases there is no Divine interference. Innocent, good, valuable men and women are drowned or burned or die by torturing disease. Tyrants or fools make whole nations or empires wretched. Frightful superstition or hateful avarice crushes whole races of men. Saints cry in vain from the stake or scaffold against their murderers. The Jewish nation was smitten down under the pious Josiah, and was cast first under the Egyptian, then under the Chaldean yoke. Why suppose its deliverance from the Assyrian was *miraculous?* How puerile to ascribe to the same God such tenderness for a few hundred diseased persons in Judea that he sent Jesus to heal them miraculously; and also such a reverence for physical law, that he will not interfere with it, even though hundreds of millions in all other ages, and countries suffer agony through its persistence! Evidently the moderns have a right to say,—by manifold unvaried experience it is learned that the Omnipresent Spirit *does not* suspend or alter physical laws to help men in moral emergencies.

A general survey shows that the reconciliation of Religion can only come about in the same way as the reconciliation of Science. *We must submit to a severer logic.* We must prove Ethical truth by Ethics only; historical facts by historical attestations only. The more marvellous a tale,—the more important if true,—the more pernicious if false,—so much the more severe and searching must be our criticism of it, so much the more exacting too must be our demand of complete proof. *Incredulity* must be honoured, as an indispensable guard of truth, and antagonist of pernicious error. A religion which scolds against and threatens the incredulous, must be regarded as self-condemned. (And what religion more condemns itself hereby, than the New Testament as accepted by Protestant England?) It was said of old, that to confess one's own ignorance is the beginning of wisdom: something of the sort has still to be said of modern religionists. Not that they have to renounce the Ethics of Christianity and build all anew: certainly not. The moral principles pervading not only Judaism and Christianity, but as understood by the highest minds, even Parseeism and Islam, have little to be recanted. They comprize a glorious volume which deserves to be cherished, loved and honoured. False history has in some details distorted religious morals; but all will soon come right when fable is exploded, and with it the pernicious dictatorial principle. When this work of destruction is completely finished (and it has to be done rigorously) co-operation of mind with mind in building up Religious truth will become normal to cultivated nations, as is already the case with Science; and human religion will grow up harmonious. The after-generations will wonder what we—the ancients—meant by calling the research of religious truth difficult. The Skeptic will no longer be able to point to the hopeless and implacable quarrels of the religious. The second proposition which I set forth in the opening will fade away, and Skepticism with it. But will Bigotry thereupon be triumphant? Nay: but Bigotry is effectually slain, so soon as the mass of cultivated minds understand that the *authoritative* decision of truth is as fatal in Religion as in Science, and must be unceremoniously thrust aside. To secure for us a rigid logic in religion we shall long need the aid of the constitutionally cautious and slow to believe; and if such aid come from the Atheist, Pantheist or modern Academic, it must in every case be thankfully received. To build safely is better than to build quickly. To have foundations that cannot be shaken, which shall last as long as human nature, is the first requisite for the Religion of the Future.

Can any one look at the phenomena of Mormonism with a fresh eye, and not see how baneful is easy faith in the pretensions to supernatural revelation? Of Joseph Smith, the founder, we perhaps know a little more than we know of Jesus or of Moses; but his followers may have plausible ground for disbelieving, as vulgar slander, the evil things said of him. We know that he built up industrious and self-denying communities, bore persecution, died a martyr's death; and that his first followers, though expelled and plundered by mob persecution, crossed a vast desert and turned a barren salt land into a garden. Their offer of brotherhood and competency to every industrious man who will join them appears to us the great magnet which attracts European Protestants in yearly bands from Britain, Scandinavia and Germany; but to the proselytes themselves the sacred book of Mormon and the proclamation made by its preachers seem as the call of God. We have no reason whatever to imagine that the intellectual ability of the early Christians to discriminate the natural and the supernatural was at all higher than that of the Mormons. Instead of moralizing over Mormon credulity, we ought to see in it, as in a mirror, how Christianity was in the beginning built up. We ought further to see in it, how great a service is performed to mankind and to Truth by those whom religious persons are apt to revile as slow of heart to believe. Grant that many carry credulity to an extreme, and grieve us by doctrine which sounds atheistic, yet we without them cannot be made perfect.

ON THE FIFTY-FIRST PSALM.

[1866.]

(Too late for Third Edition of my "Hebrew Monarchy," in 1865.)

IT has been accepted traditionally with strange unanimity, that King David wrote this Psalm, as its title avows, in confession of his guilt concerning Bathsheba and Uriah. But this seems doubly impossible.

First, the man who has committed murder and adultery, has pre-eminently sinned against man, and not against God only; and must have been strangely blind to write, "against *Thee only* have I sinned." Clearly he has in his belief committed some sin against God, which is *not* a sin against man. The blood-guiltiness which in v. 14 he deplores, must have been an act, as against the sufferer, just; but involving guilt against God in the perpetrator; perhaps because of his sacred character. He seems to have been a minister or a priest; for he hopes to convert sinners; v. 13.

Next, the two last verses of the psalm imply that the walls of Jerusalem need rĕpair, else are actually broken down. When Joab bravely forced his way into the city and captured it from the Jebusites, David would not have weakened the walls on purpose; nor was he likely to pray to God for their repair, but would himself at once order the work to be done. Moreover, he writes as one expecting, that, as a result of improved defences to Jerusalem, ample sacrifices will be made on the high altar. The only reasonable explanation is, that the psalm was written after the overthrow by Nebuchadnezzar. In David's reign the ark was not yet brought to Jerusalem, nor do we hear of that city as any centre of priestly sacrifice.

I can only conclude that this personage,—priest, let me call him,—clinging to the holy land during the Babylonish captivity, had been entangled in combat with wild marauders, such as take opportunity by foreign invasion, and had slain some of them in just defence, yet felt himself contaminated by the act. For the priestly idea at the close of the monarchy was by no means that of David's day, when a young priest might be commended as a mighty man of war. As to touch a dead body was a defilement, much more is it credible that a scrupulous conscience might be sorely distressed by engaging secretly in mortal conflict. Such seems to me the reasonable interpretation of this psalm.

But a new question here opens? Was Uriah the Hittite really murdered? I have followed the Biblical tale; but just of late have come into grave doubt of it. In fact I no longer can believe it possible, as it is transmitted. Considering the uneasy relation, not to say feud, between David and his nephew Joab, on the one side, and on the other the extreme difficulty and danger to which Joab would expose himself in endeavouring to obey David's dispatch, the story is to me incredible. When the honourable Abner had used his great military influence to aid David to the throne, Joab in private revenge murdered him; whereupon, David, not daring to punish his too powerful nephew, vented his wrath in curses on him, publicly and ostentatiously uttered. Soon after, in hope of shaking off his nephew's ascendancy, David offered the chief captaincy to him who in the assault on Jebus (afterwards called Jerusalem) should be foremost in bravery: but Joab disappointed him, by winning the prize himself. In the affair of Bathsheba, it would have been simple infatuation in David to write to Joab a letter such as is imputed. Joab by displaying the document to the army could at once have displaced David from the throne. On the other hand, it was morally impossible for Joab to command the aid of his men in betraying their brave comrade to the enemy. Their indignation would have been turned against Joab himself. Nor only so, but all who had the smallest acquaintance with warfare would know how often it happens that the brave man escapes, when the coward runaway is slain. Missile weapons from an enemy do not take the course which a traitorous commander asks of them. One may almost call the tale *physically* as well as *morally* impossible; certainly it does not deserve acceptance as history, when narrated in a summary two or three centuries later.

Such argument points to the conclusion, that Uriah was slain in honourable combat without complicity of Joab: but his death was so opportune for David, who had just then excellent reason for rejoicing in it, that the public leaped to the inference that it was brought about by his definite order. The deeds of a despotic prince are so shrouded, that suspicion is apt to aggravate guilt very unjustly, where real guilt is notorious. On the whole then, while accepting David's adultery, I refuse to believe the still greater and monstrous crime.

Of course the actual talk of Nathan with David cannot be pressed as though we had Nathan's authentic M.S. before us.

THE NEW TESTAMENT *INADEQUATE* AS A STANDARD OF MORALS.

[1867.]

MORAL judgments are instinctive to every individual; but morality, as a system of rules, grows up with human experience over the breadth of each society. The experience even of nations being limited, we have to appeal to the community of nations to obtain broader judgments of right and wrong; nor do we even so attain a final standard on every point. For, inasmuch as in process of time new relations are developed and new phenomena excite to new inquiry, fresh moralities arise or old decisions are corrected: thus the wisdom of even the collective past proves itself imperfect. No one thinks that he dishonours Aristotle or Cicero by impugning special parts of their moral systems. It is not until infallibility is claimed for a moral teacher, that his votaries are stung by the imputation that his morality is imperfect. Yet this is exactly the case in which it becomes a moral duty to point at the imperfections. The offence hereby given is no bad measure of the mischief done by the consecration of error.

Further: the worth of an instrument is not unfitly estimated by the design of its inventor. A summer-house does its duty, if it shelter us in summer: we do not expect it to protect us in all weather. A system of morals written in the time of Seneca did good service, if it was well adapted for imperial Rome. This is *primâ facie* our position towards apostles who expected a speedy return of Christ from heaven, and a burning up of this earth. Of Paul we know most, and can speak definitely. He cannot have been ignorant that in past days citizenship had with its privileges specific duties, and that in free polities patriotism was expected of every citizen. Nor can he have been blind to the essential injustice of slavery which treats a man as a chattel, and (in Aristotle's words) defines a slave as "a living tool!" That Paul's teaching should be *defective* concerning the rights and duties of citizens, concerning war, concerning slavery and the rights of man, followed necessarily from his belief that the end of all things was at hand. *No time was left* to improve the world, to regenerate politics, to enfranchise slave-castes. No new civil freedom was to be expected: radical change was impossible: softening of cruelties in detail was alone to be thought of. Mercy, not Justice, was the sole aim possible. The task of a Christian was for the future world, not for the present: for the few, not for the many. "I endure all things (says Paul) for the sake of *the elect*, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." Seeing that this visible earth was speedily to be burnt up, no wise man would busy himself to improve its surface. Better irrigation and tilth, better roads, better mechanism, improvements of art and science, better laws of land, better condition of the poor, wiser government, were matters of little worth to one who waited for a divine Avenger shortly to appear, descending from the clouds with myriads of angels. With this belief their moral system was harmonious; perhaps inevitably. Under our change of circumstances, such beliefs are noxious; and that too, whether this or that passage of the New Testament is, or is not, genuine. Our sole concern at present is with the popular text, as read at church and as accounted sacred.

Fully to enumerate the moral defects of the New Testament might be equivalent to a complete moral treatise. To specify some cardinal heads will suffice to establish that it is disastrous to accept the book as A SACRED AND SUFFICIENT STANDARD OF RIGHT.

I.—The moral topic most characteristic in the discourses of Jesus is his doctrine and precepts concerning Property. Unlimited open-handedness is with him a cardinal virtue. We are to give to every beggar, and lend to every one who asks. No inquiry is suggested, whether the petitioner be idle or unworthy: nay we are commanded to submit to unjust exactions. To lay up store for future necessities is expressly forbidden: even the retention of wealth acquired or inherited becomes impossible to those who obey him. All who will obey him must sell their goods and give away the proceeds, as a wise provision for their welfare in an after-world. That Jesus intended to be understood literally, is clear from the practice of his immediate followers, from his solemn blessing on their obedience, and from his moralizing over the failure of a rich young man who did *not* obey.

With such precepts it is consistent, not to inculcate that Industry is a duty or Beggary a disgrace. The twelve in Matthew and the seventy in Luke are really Mendicant Friars. No wonder that in the Catholic Church Beggary is held in honour as an Institution, while private thrift has been discouraged and family affection has been sacrificed for ecclesiastical aggrandizement. All Protestant philanthropists avow that the precept "Give to him that asketh" is of very pernicious tendency, and that the poor cannot be raised without their own industry, forethought and thrift, which Jesus does not urge, but certainly rather discourages. To command *all* to sell their properties is to command an absurdity; for if all attempted it, there would be no buyers. Only an "elect remnant" could possibly obey. Thus to defend the precept, is to confess that such morality was not intended for the human race. If those who use this plea would constantly abide by it, and *cease to pretend* that *the precepts of Jesus are suited for a universal religion*, they would make this argument needless. Widely different are the precepts of Paul; but the contrariety only the more signally displays the insufficiency of the New Testament as a guide of life and a standard of morals.

II.—Concerning Political Power the Christian doctrine is very obscure. Ought we to hold and exercise Power? By what tests are we to recognize Power to be lawful? When the Power is lawful, are there limits to obedience? or what limits? Is the tongue to be submissive to power as well as the hand? What is the fitting demeanor towards lawful Power, when its demands are excessive or unjust? Opposite replies might be either gathered or suggested by the *conduct* of the teachers. When tribute is asked of Jesus, he works a miracle (according to Matthew) to get tribute-money, but in paying it lays down that this is a condescension, because God's children are *by right* free. (Such seems to be the sense; but the argument is somewhat obscure.) On the other hand, the wonderful doctrine is dictatorially propounded, that every coin which bears Cæsar's image is Cæsar's property. In the Sermon of the Mount also, zealous obedience to arbitrary exactions is inculcated. But what if an officer demand service as a soldier? Is a Christian to take a soldier's engagement of obedience, or to refuse? Soldiers under Roman misrule were habitually made tools of tyranny. Centurions indeed were often mere executioners. The soldier might be ordered to kill a Roman prince, to arrest or behead John the Baptist, to scourge or to crucify Jesus; and in general, to invade foreign countries, to burn the villages and towns of the unoffending, to shed innocent blood like water, and leave the fatherless and widows to starve. If the disciple of Jesus was to refuse obedience, then within what limits? Was it his duty to endure martyrdom rather than submit to conscription? It cannot be said that these questions are so answered in the New Testament that pious Christians, reading devoutly, discover the same answers. Indeed the reply was urgently needed under Roman violence not less than now.

That any precepts on this topic may be intelligible and instructive, the first thing needed is, a clear theory concerning the moral position of him who holds power. But on this the New Testament vacillates, and is very perplexing. In the thirteenth chapter of Paul to the Romans, the *de facto* holder of power is a sacred officer of God. He argues: "there is no Power but of God;" therefore its holder is "the minister of God for good," and he who resists Power, resists the ordinance of God, and shall receive *damnation*, that is, condemnation at the *divine* bar. It is distinctly added, that the subjection is to be given, as to God's officer, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake; *i. e.*, not as to a robber through fear, but as to one who makes rightful demand. Unlimited tribute-paying is on the same ground prescribed; "for they are God's ministers." This Apostle goes so far as to assume, that the ruler is uniformly good and wise. He lays down absolutely: "Wilt thou not be afraid of the Power? *do good, and thou shalt have praise of the same.*" Perhaps Claudius Cæsar was then on the throne; Nero certainly was not known as a tyrant to the provinces. Indeed the worst oppressions were imputed (and generally with truth) to subordinate officials. The Emperor and Senate were supposed to be the refuge of the oppressed. It was natural for Paul, as a Roman citizen, to take this view. But the fact remains, that the theory here set forth, if adopted as a moral rule, does not discriminate between a native government acting within established law, and an invader, a usurper, a mere upstart bandit: nor does it leave room for legitimate insurrection even in the cause of national law, treaties and compact, when there is breach of oath and flagrant tyranny on the part of the ruler. It simply *assumes*, that the more powerful is always right, and infers that he who resists is always wrong. Surely this is a very false and pernicious doctrine, ruinous to freedom and to law. That this was the doctrine of Jesus is not quite clear; since inference from parables is not safe. Yet perhaps the many will always gather from his parables, that kings are never wrong in a quarrel with their subjects. When citizens hate the pretender to a throne, and say:

We will not have this man to reign over us; their slaughter by the successful aspirant is regarded as a thing of course, and apparently is approved—Luke xix. 14—27. In the same absolute tone is the precept of Peter: "Fear God: honour the king; and Paul's to slaves: "Be obedient to your masters, *as unto Christ.*—Ephes. vi. 5. The hypothesis of an unrighteous command seems never to be admitted. At the same time, in Ephes. vi. 12, Paul holds with the book of Daniel, that the Gentile royalties are under diabolical, not divine patronage, therefore are usurpations of Christ's royal power. A little later in the Apocalypse the apostle John represents Roman royalty as a fierce beast fighting against God and his saints and about to be cast into a lake of fire. Even Jesus has some disparaging allusions to the kings of the Gentiles (Luke xxii. 25) and positively forbids his disciples to hold such power, for the chief among them is to be on a level with the rest. Nor is it to be forgotten that in Matthew and Luke Satan claims to be king of this world and offers dominion to Jesus on condition of allegiance. Jesus does not deny his dominion, but simply declares homage to him unlawful. Thus we alight on the very opposite theory to that before presented.

Nevertheless "to obey God rather than man," is made an Axiom (Acts iv. 19). If this be seriously and consistently accepted, and the individual conscience is to decide what things are God's command, then (since Justice is above all things God's command) the precept over-rules all unjust commands of rulers and justifies unlimited resistance to perceived injustice. It were well, if all Christians so accepted it. But in the context, "obedience to God" refers solely to preaching the gospel, and historically the Christian interpretation has limited resistance to ecclesiastical matters. If a king command his officers to rob and murder, they must obey, and not describe his commands in terms so rude: let them rather be called: "deeds necessary *by reasons of state.*" But if he command them to touch dignitaries of the Church or its sacred property, then they entitle obedience to the king, disobedience to God. The English hierarchy under James II. seems to have held such logic. Nor did the Christians under Nero differ from it much. While Nero did but kill brother, wife, mother and Roman patricians, the Christian Church either did not know or did not care: but when he attacked Christians *as such*, they could not help knowing, and could not help caring. Resistance to the ruler, instead of incurring *damnation*, became their cardinal duty, and the Emperor was degraded from a minister of God to God's dire enemy.

No one can blame those Christians, that, like other men, they thus learned from experience. But the book which combines theories thus contradictory, cannot wisely be made our authoritative guide in morals.

III.—Connected with, but different from, this is the topic of Nationality. What is a Nation? Has a Nation, as such, any rights? a right of self-defence or of self-government, of hereditary laws? Are its treaties binding? Have its members any mutual special duties? Is Patriotism a duty? or is love of country a weakness?

All these topics were of high interest in the centuries which preceded Christianity, as they are at this moment. But after Macedonia and Rome had subverted law and freedom, and had widely fused the civilized West into a hollow and nominal unity, Nationality was obliterated over the area for which alone Christian teachers write. Whether Dacians or Britons had any right of national existence, neither Paul nor John was at leisure to discuss. To those who were "waiting for the Son of God from heaven" such topics of morality were unpractical. While the high Executive of Rome were beyond the influence of Christian preaching, it was of no avail to reprove its ambition or define the conditions which alone justify war. We cannot complain that the apostles wrote for their own day; but since *as a fact* they have omitted to treat topics of cardinal importance in our day, they are to us essentially defective teachers.

IV.—Still worse is the defectiveness of their extant writings on the most essential questions of private and family right. These did immediately and vitally affect their contemporaries: yet such decisions or hints as they have left us are seeds of pernicious error. The *rights* of man, woman, child or slave are not alluded to in the New Testament though they must be implied wherever the words Just, Justice occur. Even then, we do not escape hurtful ambiguity. The same epithet confuses the idea of Just, Righteous and Merciful. Thus, when Joseph in Matthew is called a Just man, it means, not that he respected the *rights* of his bride, but that he was too merciful to bear hard on a guilty woman.* Reverence for *Justice*, as such, is very rarely pressed in the New Testament. Jesus forbids us to stand up for our own rights: we are to surrender them to the first violent claimant. Well!

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* The word which in classical Greek means *Justice*, in the Greek of the Septuagint may be rendered *mercy* and even an *alms*. The Arabic word corresponding to the Hebrew has the same ambiguity.

suppose that to be always permissible. He might nevertheless have urged his disciples to stand up bravely *for the rights of others*, but the topic nowhere appears. BRAVERY IN DEFENCE OF OTHERS' RIGHTS is a virtue unmentioned, and, it may seem, unimagined. Yet surely in all independent moralists, Justice and such Bravery are virtues of prime importance. In the modern view, the moral state of society primarily depends on fundamental Law being JUST. Of course, on that cardinal matter—just tenure of Land—no word is dropt in the New Testament, though through Roman violence and avarice all the provinces were suffering. But that Public Law is of any importance to Public Morals, is a principle which (naturally enough) cannot be learned from the apostolic epistles. In avowing the fact I fully recognize their unparalleled excellence in stimulating to generous and noble devotion to all practical virtue. Use them as an ennobling aid,—they are a mine of gold: deal with them as a sacred letter and an eternal law—they may even harden the heart to cruelty.

The most absolute and heartless violation of personal right is in the system of Slavery, which treats a man as a piece of property, robs him of everything, even of self, of wife, of children, denies to a mother any right in her child, and subserves licentiousness, cruelty and every form of crime. I do not admit the thought that any leading Christian justified the institution. Nevertheless, they have left no protest against it on record, unless James (v. 4) may be so understood; and *as a fact*, slaveholders have always found great strength to their cause in the apostolic precepts to slaves and masters: especially in the absence of any suggestion to a *Christian* master that men and women cannot be chattels, and ought to be set free. "The time is short (argues Paul): the Lord is at hand. Art thou a slave? care not for it: thou art the Lord's freeman. May'st thou be made free? use it rather." But if the Lord was to return in three years, why was a Christian master to be *unjust* for those three years? Evidently the apostles *did not discern* the injustice. They cannot have seen (what old Homer saw) how hard is virtue to a slave. They were in this matter blinded by the moral atmosphere of the age; else they must have given other precepts to masters. They could not alter the political law, but the law did not forbid manumission. They might have at least urged payment of wages and back payment of arrears of wages, and encouragement to slaves to purchase their freedom, where the master thought he had a right to demand this. They might have denounced as a crime the selling of a slave, and insisted (as perhaps James the Just, head of the despised "Judaizers," did insist) that to enforce men's service without paying wages is dishonesty. Certainly no such doctrines were heard in the Gentile or Pauline Churches. The omission has been deplorably pernicious in all these later times, in which State Policy has professed allegiance to the Christian books.

V.—The *rights* of children are set aside as summarily as those of citizens and of men. A despotic power is conceded to the parent, children are commanded to obey *in all things* (Col. iii. 20) without exception, and without limitation of ages.—Still more unreasonable is the precept to wives of unlimited submission. "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, *as unto the Lord:*" Ephes. v. 22. Peter adds, that they are to obey, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, *calling him Lord:* 1 Peter iii. 6. As among early barbarians, so by the apostles, an essential inferiority is attributed to the female sex, and appeal to early doctrines, texts and legends is frankly made in proof! "Adam (forsooth) was *first* created, *then* Eve;"—a decisive fact!

It is very strange that Christian advocates are fond of claiming high credit for the religion, as having *elevated* woman; whereas the precepts keep the whole sex down in the unjust depression in which that age found them. According to Paul, the man is the glory of God, but the woman is the glory of the man. Indeed he says, the husband is the head of the wife, *as Christ is the head of the Church.* The sexes are thus made out to be separated by a vast and impassable chasm. On this scheme Milton formed his degrading estimate of woman:

> "He for God only, she for *God in him.*"

On the legend concerning Eve being *first* deceived by the talking serpent we are (forsooth) to base this fancy fraught with endless injustice! The rights of women of late obtain more and more attention, and will at last be won; but only as Slavery has been overthrown, *against hard resistance from Biblical traditions.*

It is not possible to make out from the New Testament what rights against a husband a wife retains: equally obscure is the right of a maiden to reject a bridegroom pressed on her. In the only allusion to the subject (1 Cor. xvi. 36—38) Paul advises a man not to give "*his virgin*" into marriage (that is, it seems, his daughter, his sister or his ward) unless there be some necessity, (apparently meaning, some legal compulsion); yet adds, that there is no harm in it, if on the whole he sees fit to give her away. That the maiden ought to have some voice as to a matter of such life-long interest to her,—above all, that *she ought not to be given to a man for whom she has no love,*—does not seem to cross Paul's mind. Not that he takes for granted that she is of very tender years; for he expressly puts the case of one who is near to passing the flower of her age. It is wonderful how notions so savouring of the old barbarism should be glorified as sacred, and trumpeted as elevating woman. Nay, but nowhere in the New Testament does its doctrines concerning the sexes elevate *man* any more than *woman;* for no allusion to LOVE as essential to marriage is anywhere dropt. Yet this is the cardinal matter to distinguish man from brute, and to moralize into permanent relation what else is mere sensual appetite. Euripides is here a nobler teacher than Jesus, Paul or John. The Greek poet says:

> "A school of Wisdom and Virtue is LOVE
> Pre-eminently,......and to young men I proclaim
> Never to shun LOVE, but to use it rightly when it comes."

Sad to say, Paul gives not a hint, that marriage without love is *a fraud* on one's partner, and involves all vehement natures in severe danger. But it is better to pass to another side of this subject, which is scarcely less important.

VI.—I mean, the basis on which the duty of Chastity is placed. The apostolic doctrine was excellently intended, but fails to go to the bottom of the duty,—which is, Justice to Woman, and thereby it is not merely unsound in theory, but mischievous in practical result. Paul's argument makes "continence" to be the duty of *saints,* not of unconverted ordinary men. Celibacy he accounts a higher state, but one for which not all saints have "*a gift.*" The natural appetite which exists in all men (except idiotic and imperfect natures) he stigmatizes as "motion of sin," and advises marriage solely to avoid or quell troublesome desire. This doctrine is not only degrading and demoralizing, but has certainly been the germ of misery to many devout souls, and the impetus to morbid penances,—if penance be the right name. That childbirth is the divine purpose of sexual union, no apostle can have been ignorant; but to continue the human race was to them of very small importance in a world about to be burnt up speedily. Paul approves of marriage neither as fulfilling the instinct of personal Love, nor as due to the national claim for successive citizens; but only as a legal *vent* (!) to a very undesirable appetite, from which high saints (it seems) are free. Thus marriage was inevitably degraded, and a foundation was laid for the noxious identification of *Chastity* with *Celibacy*, whereby the Catholic Church insults Marriage as *Un*chaste. That Love was not thought essential to virtuous marriage is excusable in that age, but not the less stamps the New Testament morality with grave imperfection.

If it were expedient here to go into details which verge on Physiology, it would be easy to show that unless Polygamy be allowed, marriage is insufficient as a "*vent;*" that marriage without love merely stimulates lower propensities, and debases manhood; while Love, and Love alone, ennobles and spiritualizes natural instinct; aiding chastity in the unmarried, self-controul in the married; moreover, that in neither sex does Chastity tend to disease, whatever may be asserted by base modern doctrine. It is credibly reported that many of the worst sensualists are married men; and no wonder, if Love is to be driven out by Lust. To this alas! the apostolic *letter* tends, if the letter is accounted sacred and divine.

Bad is made worse, when Chastity is propounded as *only* a spiritual and transcendental duty, binding on the saints, only because their bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. Saints ought not to take the members of Christ and make them members *of a harlot*. In this we have no basis for a world-wide morality.

If we are to establish Chastity on a sound foundation, we must begin by exploding the noxious phantasy, that man is driven by physiological necessity like the brutes. No modern physician, however he may apologize for *male* unchastity, justifies by like argument unchastity in young *women*, in whose case the plea would be more plausible. Unchastity in man (except where it is wholly unnatural and monstrous) may be broadly entitled, *Injustice to Woman*. This is its main, its cardinal condemnation. Thus Chastity, *like Honesty*, is a universal human duty, not transcendental and specially saintly. To avoid morbid theory, the moralist must cease to censure the instincts which God has implanted;—instincts essential to the continuance of the race, and sources of its most sacred duties and joys. Let him direct his severity against man's corruption.—Not only is marriage now variously discouraged, but fleshly desire in which is no personal Love, is stimulated artificially. Voluptuous pictures, statues, literature, inflammatory to the mind, are a vast weight against Chastity; likewise alcoholic drinks, inflammatory to the body, lessen the delicacy of mental perceptions, loosen the tongue to unseemly utterances, derange the balance of the judgment, weaken the power of self-guidance and the energy of the will. Of all the causes which make unchastity the visible and flagrant disgrace of Christian cities, intoxicating drink is the greatest by far. Not until a very severe check is put upon its use (severer than any contemplated in the New Testament) and boys are trained as modestly as girls, shall we learn how natural is purity to man, how unnatural is impurity, equally with all sin and all disease.

VII.—Next after the bodily needs of man, Moral law has to treat our mental desires. First may be named the desire of knowledge, which when methodized culminates in science. It is now to us a familiar thought that knowledge enlarges and science ennobles the mind; that both of them tend to make industry more fruitful, and are often necessary to make liberality beneficial. On their development and diffusion we see the physical and moral welfare of the millions of mankind largely to depend, and that they are of prime importance to the truth and purity of religion. What then is the doctrine of the New Testament concerning (secular) knowledge and science? In brief, the few allusions to them are *disparaging;* at which we cannot wonder; such, however, is the fact. The only knowledge mentioned with approbation is knowledge of religious doctrine. Knowledge (*gnosis*) is several times sarcastically glanced at, "Knowledge puffeth up;" "the Greeks seek after wisdom." But, that knowledge deserves to be pursued systematically, as the labour of a life; that the desire of knowledge *may be* a virtue, indeed an ennobling and fruitful virtue; that its steady advances, displaying God's works and mode of working, are adapted and destined to exalt our conception of Him and to explode superstitious fables, no hint appears in the New Testament. Such thoughts have come to us by the enlarged experience of near two thousand years; thoughts necessarily too high for these writers, saintly as they were. We must not expect to glean from the New Testament intelligent moral instruction on this head, any more than lessons in astronomy or chemistry.

VIII.—The love of Beauty rises in nations earlier than the love of knowledge, and already had been widely cultivated in Greece, especially under the forms of Sculpture, Painting, Architecture, and Poetry. Is this love a legitimate passion, which has to be controuled and wisely directed? or is it illegitimate, and as such, needing to be extinguished? The question is important to morality now, and was important then; yet who can point out any passage of the New Testament which propounds and answers it? Some will say that all its books are totally silent on the topic: others will say that the love of beautiful forms and colours is sternly prohibited under the contumelious description, *the lust of the eye,* while the possession of things beautiful and valuable is stigmatized as *the pride of life.* "Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world: for, all that is in the world, —the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, —are not of the Father, but are of the world; and the world passeth away, and the lust thereof.—" Certainly experience seems to show that precisely according as any class of Christians has become *devotedly Biblist,* subjecting itself humbly to the decisions of the book, and looking to it as the *single source* of moral wisdom, in the same proportion it has abhorred music, painting and all high art and high poetry, contenting itself with (at most) a few grand psalm tunes and hymns of doubtful poetical merit. Elegant art and literature have been treated by out and out Biblists as carnal accomplishments, too frivolous for one, who, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, is warring against the world, the flesh and the devil. To this and only to this conclusion, it seems, the *spirit* of the New Testament leads those, who honestly make it their SUFFICIENT and INFALLIBLE teacher. But is this to be received as sound morality? Has God for no purpose given us minds susceptible of beauty, minds that can derive from it a pure and serene pleasure? Is it for nothing that he has spread before us so richly the beauties of earth, sea and sky? It is not credible, that even the faculty of laughter was given to be simply suppressed: how much less that sense of beauty which is so refining and so feeding; which adds so largely to grace of character and imparts pleasures unexhausted. Even if the aspect of the New Testament be not strictly hostile to the cultivation of this faculty, its silence is a grave defect, *if* the book be held up as an authoritative and sufficient teacher of morals.

The two last topics press peculiarly on the question of Education. A Christian parent, aware of the immense moment of Education to his children, consults the New Testament as to the staples of which Education is to consist: but he finds there nothing but that he is to bring up his child *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* Meagre indeed is this, when he wishes to learn,—Ought I to seek to qualify my child for ambitious effort, for the enjoyment of polished society and refined pleasures, for playing his part as a good citizen, for the service of arms, for a learned profession? or, because I am a Christian, ought I to limit him to sacred literature and to arts humbly useful for things material? Or again, if Education be treated on a greater scale, a Christian may consult the New Testament to discover what sort of education will be of *general* benefit, and whether it is to go beyond sacred catechisms: but he will consult it in vain for any positive result. The utmost that can be maintained, is, that the New Testament does not actually forbid intellectual culture. That the writers had any adequate idea of its importance, it would be foolish to assert. How could it seem important, to men expecting the descent of the Lord from heaven?

Instead of struggling to ascribe to them a superhuman foresight of our age, while they manifestly misdated the glorified return of the crucified Saviour; let us use the book "legitimately," as Paul said the old Law ought to be used. Then we may retain its invaluable excellencies without shutting ourselves out from nearer lights. Instead of dreading national demoralization from a total overthrow of the sacredness of the letter, we ought to discern that its *authority* stifles that higher morality which already asserts itself in literature. A nobler religion is dawning on the world, which will unite the nations by Free Thought, not by Dogma, and will establish through JUSTICE a more general goodwill, than endless talk about LOVE can ever produce.

REPLY TO A LETTER FROM AN EVANGELICAL LAY PREACHER.

[1869.]

DEAR SIR,

YOU apologize for trying to convert one a quarter of a century your senior, by telling me you tremble for my state. You express fear, lest at my age strength of *will* may resist your efforts; in other words, you suggest that *wilfulness* is the great obstacle to my going back to opinions, which, I told you, were the opinions of my youth; were those to which my education and early connections biassed me; which I held in my early manhood but long ago renounced, from finding them untenable. Is not your suggestion of my wilfulness somewhat insolent? Knowledge and truth have all my life been my earnest desire, and have never encountered resistance from my will.

You earnestly desire to know whether I have meditated on those words, "When my flesh and my heart fail me. . . ." What else can you mean, but that you expect me to tremble at death? How many brave men, not religious, not even in ordinary esteem moral, lay down their lives, without trembling, in the cause of duty! Whence comes your quiet assumption that other men are cowards? I leave that to your reflection. For myself I have only to say, that I regard premature death a great calamity, but death in ripe age or full time a divine blessing. Death is God's ordinance and gift, as much as life; each is good in its own time. As to the common talk, that "it is a fearful thing to go into the immediate presence of God," I reply, "we are already, here and always, in His immediate presence, and never can be more so." God is not a visible, tangible form, but an omnipresent Spirit; and since He is purely good and wise, no man, be he better or worse, can have sound reason for wishing *not* to be in his immediate presence. Yet a *guilty* man, no doubt, may wish it; and, it seems to me, you assume that one who does not agree with you must have a bad conscience.

You frankly appeal to me, "must we not *all* confess that we are sinners?" and you add needless protestations of your own consciousness of being utterly vile. Who denies that we are *all* sinners? I never yet knew a single fool to doubt it. Why impute such absurdity to *me?* The tenour of your letters leads me to conjecture that the necessity of "atonement by blood" for sin is such an axiom with you, that you assume one who rejects it to be so self-righteous, as not to know that he is a sinner at all. Taking for granted that I am unreconciled to God, you generously offer to show me the way of reconciliation,—Christ! and you assure me that my whole nature was corrupt from birth, and has lost the image of God in which Adam was created.

I have already told you, that you seem to me to confound *frailty* with *corruption*, but you have not understood me. Since Adam (according to you) sinned, his primitive nature was frail, yet you do not call it corrupt, you say it was created upright. If so, neither can natural corruption be justly inferred in *you*, from the very great vileness which you ascribe to yourself. If you are corrupt, it is your own doing, your personal sin; your nature at birth was as upright and as frail as Adam's but not corrupt. I admit it was frailer in one sense than that of your Adam, for *he* was created, it seems, a full grown man, *we* began existence as infants. If, even with this advantage, he sinned on the first temptation, nothing worse could be done by any of us. We have not *lost* any of the image of God which a distant ancestor of ours possessed. The very idea is dishonourable to the Creator, that he would construct a progenitor endowed with the power of wrecking his whole posterity by his own single act. We should bitterly censure a shipwright, who sent to sea a ship laden with five hundred emigrants, that foundered under the first feeble side-breeze. Can any one who means to be pious dare to impute to Man's Creator the making such a top-heavy nature for him, that with one sin of one Adam we all rolled, millions of millions, into an abyss of perdition, and need a stupendous effort of divinity to save . . . . . a very few!

Moreover, if the Creator responsible for my nature is not God, but some Adam, and God is ashamed of it as a bad piece of work, (nay, necessarily hates it, as I understand you,) then God deals with me as a father who repudiates an affiliated child, denying that it is his. Hereby, disowning fatherhood, he forbids me to call him Creator, or to be grateful for an existence crippled, bastard, and impotent for good.

You are not satisfied with painting to me this world's miseries, but you assure me that—not through God's fault! Oh, no! but through Adam's fault—an eternity of sin lies before the vast mass of mankind. But when, according to you, that mass is utterly helpless, and the Creator knew they would be so, what, I repeat, are we to think of his wisdom and goodness (to say nothing of his Prescience) in so creating Adam?

In short, I mark three cardinal and pernicious errors, which you hold as cardinal truth. 1. That man's nature is NOT *as God created or intended it;* but that the Creator has been outwitted (by the Devil, I suppose) and poor mankind has to suffer through God's unwisdom. 2. The horrible and incredible idea that God will retain in eternal sensitive existence beings who can do nothing but sin and suffer; whose sufferings are compared to burning in everlasting flame. 3. That God cannot remit sin without shedding of blood, but is reconciled to us (or reconciles himself to us? or reconciles us to himself?—for I do not know which phrase you adopt) by the BLOOD of Jesus.

You have twice attempted to urge upon me belief in the theology of the book of Genesis. I must repeat more pointedly, what is not my discovery, but that of Christian divines long ago, that the theology of that book is very barbaric. What avails it to offer me a defence of "God repented that he had made man" (words which I have not attacked) when all the thoughts are alike barbarously crude? "Sons of God" beget "giants" out of daughters of men, and corrupt the earth. God repents that he has made man, and destroys him by a universal flood. He saves Noah with seven others, and with all sorts of beasts, under wholly impossible conditions, and with a result to the distribution of animals as certainly false as the deluge. After it Noah offers a burnt sacrifice of clean beasts, and Jehovah, like Homer's Jupiter, *smells a sweet savour;* and sets his rainbow in the cloud as a sign, again like Homer's notions. Jehovah also resolves *never again* to curse the earth for man's sake, for, says he, there is no use in it, so wicked are men! He might as well have thought of that before the flood. All is of a piece in these legends. Jehovah eats roast veal with Abraham, and teaches him the disgusting rite of circumcision as a religious duty. He honours Abraham, in the very base conduct of twice passing off his wife as a sister. So in Exodus, xxiv. 9-11, he shows himself personally to the seventy elders and to the nobles of Israel. *Christianity professes higher and purer things than these*, but by pressing on us as alike valuable, alike true, all parts of that very diverse collection of books which you call the Bible, you damage all your own better thoughts.

This Pagan notion of Atonement by Blood you make cardinal in your Christian gospel. "It is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin," says the writer to the Hebrews. True, and equally impossible for a *man's* blood, or, if so you will have it, a *God's* blood. To suppose *moral* sin transferred from one being to another, is a barbarous absurdity; to transfer the penalty is immoral. It is not endured in any approved legislation. Jews insist that it was *not* endured in Judaism, only ceremonial "*errors*" (Heb. ix. 7) had ceremonial atonement: crime never had any. I believe this to be correct; but that is to me a question of history, not of theology. If the Hebrew law taught the immoral idea that blood could atone for moral iniquity, so much the worse for it: but shall Christian hymns therefore smell of the slaughterhouse? Alas! they do. Far better said Paul, "offer yourselves as living sacrifices."—Again: "Unto Israel, saith God, I will take no bullock out of thy house; if I were hungry, I would not tell thee." The psalmist who wrote that, knew the vulgar idea of sacrifice to be the Pagan one, that the gods needed to *partake* of the sweet savour. The Psalms and Prophets have truly little sympathy with bloodshed for sin. Read the 103rd Psalm (it is but one out of many), you will find no idea in it that God wants bloody atonement. This coarse Paganism, as far as I understand, came in only as *metaphor* into the earliest Christianity, and did not attain its sharpest prosaic form until Archbishop Anselm under our William Rufus. But, unhappily, Luther and Calvin adopted Augustine's doctrines as a basis, and logically rushed into Anselm's extreme; thence it has come to vex and damage Protestantism, and is now presented to us as the Gospel or *Good News,* in connection with a corrupt humanity and an eternal hell. If you *will* preach such things, you must truthfully call them Bad News. Well did David Hume say, that the Protestant Reformation was checked, when the generation which followed Calvin found that they had to choose between believing that God was a wafer or that God was a cruel tyrant.

The core of the mischief lies in your monstrous and unproved assumption that books called Holy Scripture, widely different in age, merit, and doctrine, are all infallible. To me it is as certain as any fact in the world, that they are often self-contradictory, foolish, and barbaric; that they often show extreme credulity in the narrators, and are convicted of error in every branch,—moral and theological, as well as literary and scientific. The very excellences of their more devotional parts (*to which I do honour on every fit occasion*) are mischievous, if they are allowed to stamp sanctity on the baser books, and on the unavoidable errors of the better. You profess yourself "not to have patience" to read criticism on the Bible by men whom you call "enemies of the Bible." You must then, either be careless whether books are spurious, or believe that you have an inward divine gift to distinguish the genuine. But as I abhor fictitious authorship, and know the pernicious results of national credulity; as, moreover, I have no belief that I or you or any man can know literary facts of the past by an inward teaching, you surely ought to see the *impossibility* of my receiving divine lessons from you, while you ground them on the Bible, and flatly decline to give any reason why, against all my own perceptions and the result of many years' anxious study, I am to receive the Bible as authoritative. It may be just worth while to observe, that, in particular, the narrative books of the New Testament seem to me to deserve little credit, and often to misrepresent events and words grossly and even recklessly. But I hold morality to be far more important than theology,—earlier in knowledge and more solid in foundation. Babes in science may judge soundly of morality, and by it confute the high pretensions of cursing theologies.

I am, truly yours, F. W. Newman.

ANTHROPOMORPHISM.

A COMMENT ON SOME POETRY SENT BY A LADY.

[1870.]

DEAR MADAM,

I THANK you for the elegant Poetry which you have sent me, *with a purpose*, as I believe. In the name of the writer I seem to recognize an amiable gentleman who was my pupil more than twenty years ago. Permit me to give an opinion, *theologically*, upon his doctrine.

He desires to know something more of God than that which can be seen by the outward eye, even by the painter's eye, on the surface of nature. He is right. His religious instinct leads him to address God, and to entitle him "Father!" Again he is right. He evidently attributes to God *a mind that understands us*, and *a soul that loves us*. To believe this firmly, unchangeably, is the core of religion, in my judgment, and suffices for everything. It gives peace in trouble and even amid a sense of guilt; and not peace only, but joy, if it be but intense enough.

Yet the writer of the poetry is not satisfied with a spiritual belief in God: he wishes to put *sight* in place of *faith*. He tells us that he wants to gaze upon a *Face*, and puts the word into italics. Here I think he drops out of rational and spiritual religion into a credulity which has everywhere induced baneful idolatry, assimilating God to man. A face? and why not a hand? why not a foot? Does God need eyes and nose? To suppose it, is to abandon the first principles of manly religion, and go back into ancient puerilities. This is the basis of so many people's notion, that in a future world the immeasurable Divinity will be seen and known by our bodily eyes, not merely by our mental powers, and that we are to walk by faith on earth, but by sight in heaven. In my conviction mental faith alone can appreciate or apprehend the Infinite One. The eye, whether it see a face or a glare of light, has none the more insight into

God. The pure in heart may see something of him now, because they know him from within; and if hereafter they become nobler and purer within, they will know him less imperfectly. But against the notion that the ocular vision of a *face* is,—here or there,—to give insight into God, I ask permission to protest, as against a pernicious superstition.

I am, Very truly yours,
FRANCIS W. NEWMAN.

EMORI NOLO: MORTUUM ME ESSE NIHIL ÆSTUMO.

I.

ONE wrote of old, "The struggle of this dying
Is all I dread:
I shall not heed when men above me, sighing,
Say, 'He is dead.'"

Not in such words, oh Father of our Spirits,
Speak we again:
A fear, a hope each child of us inherits,
Making them vain.

II.

Awful the hour, and shall be through the ages,
That closeth Life;
With the worn Soul the weary Body wages
Self-torturing strife.

Till far, so far from loving eyes around them,
One journeyeth lone,
And that close wedlock that for years hath bound them
Ends with a groan.

The pale still Form, so late so dear a treasure,
Its fate we know;
The Dust, the Worm, its depth of ruin measure
Where it lies low.

But the vast doubt wherewith our souls are shaken
Outlasts the tomb!
"Where, in what regions shall the Wanderer waken,
Gazing on whom?"

III.

Father! I live or die, in this confiding,
That thou art King;
That each still Star above me owns thy guiding,—
Each wild bird's wing.

That Nature feels Thee, great unseen Accorder
Of all her wheels,
That tokens manifest of thy mightier order
Her strife reveals.

And that without Thee not a wave is heaving
Nor flake descends,
That all the giant Powers of her conceiving
Are thy Son's friends.

IV.

Yet, I beseech Thee, send not these to light me
Through the dark vale;
They are so strong, so passionlessly mighty,
And I so frail.

No! let me gaze, not on some sea far reaching
Nor star-sprent sky,
But on a *Face* in which mine own, beseeching,
May read reply.

For more than Poets' song or Painters' seeing
Of fiery Hell,
Thrills me this dread of waking into Being
Where no souls dwell.

&c., &c., &c.

CAUSES OF ATHEISM.

DELIVERED TO WORKING MEN IN BRISTOL.

[1871.]

ὦ γῆς ὄχημα κἀπὶ γῆς ἔχων ἕδραν,
ὅστις ποτ' εἶ σὺ, δυστόπαστος εἰδέναι,
Ζεῦ! εἴτ' ἀνάγκη φύσεως, εἴτε νοῦς βροτῶν,
προσηυξάμην σε. πάντα γὰρ, δι' ἀψόφου
βαίνων κελεύθου, κατὰ δίκην τὰ θνήτ' ἄγεις.

Euripidis Troades, 884.

EVERY great phenomenon has a history. Theism has a history as well as Atheism, and each is instructive. But Atheism, being a more limited fact, may be treated in a narrower space; and I venture to hope, its stimulating causes may be so expounded as to aid towards some result. This hope induced me to invite your attention this evening.

I called Atheism a limited fact; yet in an important sense of the word, and some may think the truest sense, it is painfully common even among professing Christians. Such is the use of the word by Paul to the Ephesians, who, during their immoral Pagan state, he says, were *without God* in the world, or (closer to the Greek) "atheists in the world." As I understand him, to believe in God is not merely to assent with the intellect that there is something in the universe superior to man, but *to revere* that superior existence. He who reveres nothing, who worships nothing above him, but lives unconscious of allegiance to God, is in the estimate of Paul an atheist. Wherever sensuality or avarice is widely spread, in whatever form men live to self, there Atheism widely prevails. But if this phraseology be thought too ambiguous, I will modify it as follows. He who gives intellectual assent to the being of a God, yet neither reveres God, nor regards man, is *worse* than an atheist. In contrast, I will add, He who finds intellectual difficulties in the doctrine of a righteous God, and knows not what to think of it, yet is intellectually modest and morally reverential, has the heart of a Theist, and may eminently deserve esteem.

The short of it is, that Religion is in the heart, not in the dry mind. Intellectual belief may be barren, but moral faith conduces to true virtue and is a natural companion of those noble virtues, Reverence and Love. Yet in this short statement we do not embrace the whole. A man may be *admired* for the accuracy and power of his intellect, but he is not therefore *esteemed* or *loved:* on the other hand, whatever the deficiency of his intellect, he deserves esteem, if he be *good.* If we can love God himself, it is only from a belief in his goodness; not for his power or high intelligence; and the same law of love applies to man. Thus there are two sorts of Theists and two sorts of Atheists. One who is intellectually a Theist may either be reverential, or destitute of reverence, and so may an Atheist. But Reverence is the vital element of moral and spiritual character. In an intellectual Theist this element may be dead or stagnant; and in an intellectual Atheist it may be active. If we fully possess ourselves with this thought, we shall come to the discussion of the Theistic argument with a chastened, calmer and wiser heart.

It is an old saying[*] among Pagan Greeks as well as among Hebrews, that Reverence is Wisdom. The wisest of the Greeks, in the midst of their highest cultivation, were so conscious of the extreme imperfection of their religious knowledge, that in their address to God theistic doubt seems to blend with theistic faith. There is a celebrated passage in Euripides, (Troades 884) which I beg to read to you, translated as I am best able:

> Oh thou on whom Earth rideth,—who on Earth
> Art firmly seated—Jove! whoe'er thou art,—
> Hard to be guessed, whether Necessity
> In Nature fix'd, or Mind which rules in man;
> Thee I adore:[†] for Thou, by noiseless track
> Passing, dost justly all things mortal guide.

An anecdote is told among the Greeks, that Hiero, military ruler of Syracuse, requested the accomplished poet Simonides to tell him what was his belief concerning God. The poet asked leave to defer his reply till the next day; but when the next day came, he asked yet another day to shape his thoughts more accurately; and after that, a third day. At length he confessed, that the longer he meditated, the harder he found it to define a reply. You find the elements of this doubt in the passage which

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[*] Euripides, Iphig. Aul. 564, τὸ γὰρ αἰδεῖσθαι, σοφία.

[†] Closer to the Greek: "Thee I have been accustomed to approach with vows."

I have read from Euripides. The poet begins by identifying God with the *ether* in which the Earth floats or rides (implying that he knew the Earth to be a globe), but adds, that God hath also firm seat on Earth; that is, He is not merely external to the Earth, but is also resident and permanent on it. The poet then, in the current formula "Whosoever thou art," expressive of wide uncertainty, annexes, "Hard to be guessed, whether Thou art Necessity of Nature, or the Mind which pervades mortal men." Thus he embraces, though doubtfully, in the being of God, *first*, all the natural forces of the universe, such as we now call Gravitation, Cohesion, Electricity and such like; *next*, the Mind by which we think, and know and feel. If he had stopt in saying that God was only the Necessity of Nature, a blind force, it would have been Atheism. When he adds the opinion that God is the universal mind, some will say, Is not this Pantheism? No; for he regards God as worthy not only of wonder, but also of adoration, and closes by giving the *reason* for adoration, ascribing to him the *righteous government* of the human world.

Observe the gradation of doubt and of faith. Concerning the physical constitution of God (if the phrase may be allowed) the Greek poet was reverentially doubtful; but concerning his moral government of the world, concerning the rightfulness of adoring him, and virtually concerning his goodness, he expresses no doubt. And is not this exactly the reasonable posture for a finite man, in reverentially essaying to define *some* thoughts concerning the infinite God? Consider of what kind is our knowledge of our fellow-men. How little do we know of their essential being! How late and limping is physical science in the history of man! yet our moral knowledge is old and certain. Love, goodness, virtue, esteem, trust, gratitude,—are very ancient experiences and confident beliefs: but what (in physical contemplation) the soul of man is,—when it begins to exist, and whether at death it ceases to exist, are in comparison very obscure inquiries. In all human knowledge, properties are learned first; the essence of things is learned later,—if ever! In other words, and perhaps more accurately, we *apprehend* things on the side in which we are in contact with them, but we *comprehend* very few things at all.

Consider again the instructive analogy furnished by the knowledge which the brutes may have of man. No one will imagine that an affectionate dog has any other knowledge of his master than a limited *apprehension*. What guess could Sir Isaac Newton's favourite spaniel have of the quality, powers and range of his master's mind? yet he had no doubt whatever that his master loved him, and deserved to be loved, though to *comprehend* his master's nature was utterly beyond his capacity. Just so, the cardinal point of *practical* Theism lies in an energetic development of the moral relation of God to man and man to God; and its wisdom requires great diffidence concerning the essential nature and powers of Him whom with one voice we pronounce to be incomprehensible. Since we know not his limits, nor have reason to assign any, we call Him unlimited, boundless, infinite as to Space as well as to Time; and again, as we have no reason to imagine that He changes with time, we call Him unchangeable as well as eternal. There is nothing of obscure or doubtful language here. But as of all things outward and visible our knowledge is very limited and our ignorance is infinite, much more must this be true of our acquaintance with an invisible Spirit.

After these preliminaries, I proceed to the historical origin of Atheism. In all the most intelligent races of men and those with whose early mind we have best acquaintance, Atheism does not grow up with men's first speculations concerning the universe, but unfolds itself at a later stage; and, as I believe, prevalently as a reaction from errors into which Theists fall.

When it is our duty to sit in judgment on the sin of others, our mental vision is purified and we become fairer, wiser judges, if we begin by inward confession of our own sin. Just so, if Theists are to judge truly of Atheists or aid to convert them, Theists need to examine their own errors which may have led Atheists astray or driven them into reaction. I hope it is not needful to remind you that Christians are Theists. To the errors of Christian Theists I must refer presently; but I first speak of the earlier appearance of Atheism, as known in our histories.

Ancient Greece is the *World* in historical *Miniature*, politically and religiously. We have their infantine religion laid before us in the poems of Homer. Though the Greeks were so very intelligent a race, yet their early conceptions of Deity scarcely admitted moral elements. Theism was with them a physical speculation only, and rested unduly on the violent phenomena of nature. In Thunder and Lightning, in Earthquake and Storms, they saw the agency of their chief gods. Yet they did not overlook more tranquil processes, such as Vegetation, Birth, and the recurrence of Day and Night. Inferior deities were assigned to these. The gods were supposed to punish occasionally the greater sins of mortals, but by no means to conform their own conduct to any law of morality. The national religion, having its source in private and various fancies, was combined and popularized by poets, under whose treatment its wildness was exaggerated into folly, caprice or brutality. Necessarily the growing intellect of the nation scorned such a religion. Nevertheless it does not appear that any conscious and systematic Atheism broke out, until a serious attempt had been made to defend the wretched and baseless mythology by mystical interpretations and other subtle devices. Then the indignation of free thought led *first* to wide-spread doubt, *next* to positive renunciation of the creed. The Doubters held that no truth is attainable on such subjects: these were called the New Academy. The Deniers avoided the name Atheists, by professing to believe in Superior Spirits who lived in eternal ease and bliss, but too tranquil to concern themselves about the management of the universe or the reigning over mankind: hence they stood in no moral relation whatever to us men. The name of Epicurus was best known in Greece as the advocate, we may say the Apostle of the latter doctrine. To us the tenets of Epicurus are most accessible in the poem of his devoted disciple, the Roman Lucretius; and in him we see most distinctly that disgust at the coarse, wild and mischievous conceptions put forth as Religion was the animating principle of his Atheism.

What happened then is sure to happen again in like circumstances. If the ostensible teachers of religion hold up for men's homage and reverence a God whose qualities and dealings shock our moral nature, it must not be expected that all who reject such a creed will be able to separate its falsehoods from its truths. Many will reject it in the mass and become Atheists, but by far the largest number of them will keep their unbelief to themselves, It is notorious that as among the priests of ancient Rome contemporary with Cicero, so in the priests of Spain, Italy and France, atheism has been a common result of corrupt religion. Protestantism does not offend common sense (at least in my opinion) so violently as Romanism; nevertheless, all who heard the scalding words of Mr. Bradlaugh in this room against the creed called Orthodox in England will permit me to insist, that an ingenuous scorn of what he regards as a degrading portraiture of God gives impulse to his atheism. English Protestants are not guiltless in this matter. They have persecuted the frank and bold men who avow their disbelief, hereby driving more timid men into silence and suppression. Christians have certainly taken no pains to *instruct* Atheists. But if they had, how could they expect instruction to be well received, while the public law treated Atheists as criminals and gave them fines and imprisonment for arguments.

But I return to the point. If the men and system typical of a national religion hold up for reverential homage the portraiture of an unjust, unmerciful, capricious or impotent God, the unbelief and scorn which justly follows will, through human infirmity, carry not a few into a disbelief of God altogether; in which case the folly of Theists is largely responsible for the Atheism. I do not wish to go into detail as Mr. Bradlaugh did, and point to the special errors which arouse indignation; it suffices to say that *there are* opinions concerning God or the gods which nothing can accredit. It avails not to quote books called sacred, or to alledge miracles, if the doctrine be such as the human conscience loathes or the human intellect reprobates. If sacred books uphold such tenets, so much the worse for the books. Books cannot have proof of infallibility so strong, as is the disproof of a doctrine which mars and pollutes the divine character. Christians habitually confute other religions by this very topic: "The god which you hold up to us is unjust, cruel, impure, a sort of devil, why is he to be honoured and revered?" Such a religion is debasing to the votary's mind; hereby it destroys its own claim of reverence.

Let it also be carefully remembered, that the great basis of popular knowledge is, *moral truth.* All social action, all national cohesion, all reverence for law, all sanctity in rule, is founded upon man's moral faculties: much more is all rational or worthy religion. "He who loves not his brother whom he hath seen, how shall he love God whom he hath not seen?" The man to whom the words Justice, Mercy, Goodness have no positive and consistent meaning can have no reason within him for worship and reverence. Practical religion must be based on these great moral ideas. A creed which violates them, demoralizes men, when it does not drive them into unbelief. If a national religion be totally corrupt, widespread atheism is nothing but the natural death of a creed which has lost moral vitality. If the atheism spring from moral indignation, I believe that it can only be a temporary winter of the national soul, in preparation for a more fruitful summer. If a very corrupt national creed, say like that of Hindostan, were swept away by atheism when other arguments had failed, we perhaps ought to regard the atheism as a beneficial visitation, like the hurricane which destroys pestilence.

I have tried to set forth one cause which I believe must always tend to produce atheism, namely, errors in a national creed; but these are made worse, if they are coupled with a presumptuous familiarity and dogmatic pretension. A Roman writer said sarcastically: "This man fancies that he knows accurately what Jupiter in private said to Juno." We see the outrageousness of such mythology. But how less is Milton blamable, who supposed himself competent to expound the discourses held by God the Father with his only begotten Son? Theology has been garrulous and confident, where modesty or silence alone becomes us. Men who call God incomprehensible seem to forget this fundamental principle precisely when it is most needed. One truth surely is quite open to every intellect, that human knowledge is limited. We see distinctly what is near; and perhaps seem to know it; but what is extreme in distance we cannot see at all. In the interval there is generally a region of half light, half shade,—which is called a *penumbra*, where we see a few strong outlines—and all the rest dimly; or, it may be, we think at one moment that we see, and the next moment doubt whether we saw aright. These phenomena of sight have their close correspondences in the mind, which in consequence is sure of some things with the greatest certainty permissible to man; is in blank ignorance of others; but finds between these extremes a region of half knowledge with a few certainties pervading it, but in general affording matter for modest or reverential opinion, not for light minded decision nor scholastic dictation. If Theists transgress modesty in dealing with this region of thought, how can they expect modesty or tenderness from Atheists?

I proceed to another deplorable phenomenon, equally baneful,—namely the tangle curiously called *Metaphysics*, in which not a few Theistic advocates have involved their doctrines. Christianity at its outset had as its boast: "Unto the poor the gospel is preached." A religion which addresses itself to the human race must be intelligible to simple minds. If the great mass of a nation are intended by God to revere and worship him, the grounds of believing in God must be on the level of very ordinary intellects. Theism, equally with Christianity, saps its own foundation, if it teaches that we cannot pass into the Holy Presence except through mazes of metaphysics. We know familiarly how much the conversion of heathens to Christianity is hindered when two missionaries teach opposite doctrines, refuting one another. In such case all will say that the heathen is blameless, if he reply, that one of them must convert the other before it is worth his while to attend to either. So too candour demands from us the admission, that Atheists say nothing unreasonable, if (being in no other respect presumptuous or irreverent) they avow that the controversies of Metaphysicial Theism discourage them from the study. Such appears to me the position of Mr. G. Jacob Holyoake, whose Atheism is of a widely different complexion from Mr. Bradlaugh's. Holyoake is a very modest man, very reverential, very anxious to learn from all whom he sees to be striving for truth. I believe he distrusts his own power of judging, where he sees Theists at variance, and in their own opinion fundamentally. I must attempt, even at the risk of getting out of my own depth, to set before you some of the controverted questions. When I see able men devoting their lives to Metaphysics, and coming to opposite conclusions, I cannot but feel great diffidence in my own power to deal with such subjects, and am always desirous to keep clear of them. In fact, if anything could make me an Atheist, it is the jangling and jargon of Theistic metaphysicians. Let me state to you some of the questions *supposed* to need solution in this inquiry.

Can the human intellect form a positive conception of the Infinite and Unconditional? Can we investigate the nature and origin of the Unconditional as a psychological phenomenon? Does our consciousness of the Finite involve a consciousness of the Infinite? Is our knowledge limited to phenomena? Can we know only the limited and the conditionally limited, or are we also capable of construing positively the unconditionally unlimited? Can we conceive either an absolute whole or an absolute part? Is our notion of the Infinite realized by a course of addition or progression, which, starting from the Finite, seeks to reach the Infinite? Can we infer the Infinitely great from the Indefinitely great? Is our notion of the Infinite a fact or ultimate datum of consciousness? Can inductive generalization draw from finite data more than they contain?

Who can expect such questions to be even understood by any who have not made scholastic metaphysics and logic a special study? As I have, *more or less*, been acquainted with them myself for full forty-five years, and in mathematics am very familiar with the idea of the Infinite, I naturally have a positive opinion on some of the questions, perhaps on most of them: but I should despair of Theism, if it were necessary for a sound belief to have discussed them at all. Some of the questions indeed about the Unconditional and the Unconditionally Unlimited, might seem to have been started, not by a sincere Theist, but by a crafty Atheist, for the express purpose of throwing dust into our eyes. The attempt to establish any practical religion by such processes of thought, seems to me worse than useless, being in fact subversive of its main object. Not only scornful and presumptuous minds, but equally the reverential, the modest and the philanthropic, are liable to be deterred from religious inquiry, if invited into it through such a road. Justly may a philanthropic person say: "Man needs the service of our energies. God, if there be a God, needs neither our aid nor our worship. Surely he cannot desire us to waste time and effort in questions of Metaphysics, about which opposite professors are in endless controversy."

Now it is a digression, and perhaps not much to my present purpose: but I imagine that many present will be saying to themselves: "What does the word Metaphysics *mean?*" I have learned from Dr. Daniel Morell how to answer this question. Metaphysics *ought* to mean, "The Science which guides Inquiry into First Principles." But whether those who are called Metaphysicians always understand this, I am not aware.

And now I might seem to have fulfilled my task, only that the metaphysician will say to me, that I cannot justly disown their controversy, without showing how Theism can be established independently of them. To reply fully to such a challenge would be, to undertake a lecture on Theism. I therefore reply historically. I say, that Theism never was established by metaphysicians through metaphysical teaching: nay, that no appreciable effect on practical religion has ever been exerted by it. Historically, the belief in God has always rested on the common perceptions of common men. The fact relieves me from the imputation of rashness, when I say, that the business of Mental Science is here *critical* and negative only, and that it is a mistake to think Philosophy,—I mean Scholastic acuteness,—can be *creative* in religion. Its sole duty is, to prune away the errors into which the ill-informed and half-cultivated intellect naturally falls; a duty which I admit and maintain to be an important one. But in order to fulfil it at all; Philosophy must condescend to speak in a purely popular dialect, and altogether abstain from the hideous jargon which seems so dear to metaphysicians. If it be true, that their thoughts cannot be expressed in so copious and powerful a tongue as the popular English, then the popular religion, (it seems!) must be unsound, until we learn to think and talk metaphysically. But if the great bulk of the human race have hitherto been incapacitated for sound religion, it is hard to feel confidence that by superfine culture a small oligarchy can become the select priesthood of God.

The Natural History of Theism displays many phases which might make an instructive volume; but in every case two stages at least seem inevitable. First, men discover in the great universe the action of Mind superior to man, and generally believe in *many* Superior Spirits co-ordinate in rank, though One may be Supreme. The relation of God or the Gods to man is conceived of, as that of a Patron to a dependent. The Gods are supposed to care *certainly* for men collectively, *probably* for some eminent men specially; and also to punish very flagrant guilt. Concerning the mental quality of the Gods, equally as of their habits, the more sober nations abstain from thought in this first stage: those of wilder imagination confidently ascribe to them the enjoyments and pastime, the passions and vices, of mortals. This is the puerile stage of religion, and implies both deficient information concerning the great world, and immature faculties in the observers. In the second or manly stage of religion it is recognized that there is no adequate ground for supposing more than One God. Spirits there may be, superior to men: if so, let them be called Angels; but they must be, like us, dependent on God. On the doctrine of One God naturally follows the belief of his entire freedom from those disturbances of mind and clouds of passion to which man is subject; freedom therefore from caprices of love and hatred; though men may be very slow in the working out the result (biassed as they are from childhood by traditional errors) that God is no respecter of persons and indulges no arbitrary favouritism. Because we cannot even guess at any reason which should mar his serenity, we attribute to him a perfectly unruffled and impartial state of mind. Moreover, as it is inevitable to believe that whatever high and pure qualities and powers we possess, must be higher and perfect in Him, therefore from consciousness of disinterested love in ourselves, we attribute disinterested love to Him. Naturally, we can have no ideas whatever of a Divine Mind, but such as are suggested by consciousness of our own minds.

In shaping the second stage of Theism which I have thus sketched, more cultivated intellects undoubtedly played a highly useful part in cutting away the superfluous fancies of barbaric imagination. But in European Christendom, at least as long back as the Mediæval schoolmen, a pretentious science has struggled to define things that ought to left indefinite, and to transmute *negatives* into positives. The word *Infinite* or Boundless, which means, that we are wholly incapable of assigning bounds to God,—a pure negative,—is pretended to be positive, and is often exchanged for Absolute. The sobriety of declaring our ignorance of bounds is changed into a dogma that he is *All*-powerful; while in antiquity when the epithet Almighty was used, it was in a burst of poetry, not a proposition of science. From the same school came the notion that the belief in God rises out of a speculation on the First Cause. Hereby they carried the mind into the impenetrable cloudiness of Past Eternity, and into what is called Cosmogony, that is, the birth of the Universe. The Hebrew book of Genesis does indeed allude to a beginning of Creation, but very little is afterward based on it. Only one verse asserts it, which may seem a mere protest against the wild notion of Greek poets, that the Gods themselves were a production of Nature. The main stream of Hebrew literature is very far from excluding the idea of God's continuous perpetual creation. It treats all working of the elements, organic and inorganic, as actings of the Spirit of God; so that each of us was created by God in birth, as truly as was Adam originally. In the older view there was no such idea as that God in the beginning *created matter;* which is another example of dogmatizing where man is necessarily ignorant: it is a later invention of scholastic presumption. Again, the antagonism of God and Matter was of Oriental origin, and had no place in the mind of Hebrew sages, who saw God permanent in Nature; hereby agreeing with the most enlightened of the Greeks; to which also, I believe, the ablest of modern believers in God converge.

In healthful and practical religion the relation of man to God is a present abiding fact, and the central point of religious thought. We come close to Him *now* and *here.* In Him we live and move and have our being. From Him come at each moment all our vital and mental powers. Our present contact with Him is the main, the cardinal point. We are not thrown back into the history, if history it can be called, of a Creation in very dim distance, for our origin from Him through a very indistinct and lengthy chain of causes. We *apprehend* God in the present. We do not try to *comprehend* Him in the regions of invisibility, nor to grasp Eternity and Infinitude in our knowledge. If He is the life of our life, He is in the interior of our spirits and a witness to our consciousness. This is practical and popular religion, whose central origin and action is *now* and *here;* but the doctrine which begins at Past Eternity and First Causation is not likely to give more heat than moonshine gives.

Now the question between us and the Atheist is very simple, and goes into small compass. In my opinion it needs no deep science to mediate between us and him. The question is this. Were ancient men wrong in seeing *Mind* in the universe? for if they were wrong, we are wrong. I seem to myself to see Mind at work on our globe itself as distinctly as I see it in my fellow-men, of whose soul I have not direct consciousness as of myself. I cannot *prove* by argument that actions in another man which seem to me to imply Purpose and Mind, do not proceed from blind forces of Nature; but you would think me a fool if I held such a theory. If an Atheist ask me to give him some idea wherein I see Superior Mind at work, I will (not to be tedious) make a twofold reply. *First,* in all animal instincts. Wise men in days comparatively recent pronounced, "God is the soul of brutes." Their instincts serve purposes which cannot be mistaken; yet the brute mind certainly is not aiming at them. I have not time to dwell on this in detail, but illustrations are obvious and plentiful. *Secondly,* since Sir Isaac Newton opened to us Physical Astronomy, no astronomer can profess Atheism without displaying imbecility. Newton shows that particles of dust or of gas, act *as if* they accurately measured vast distances of space. When the planet Mars comes nearer to the Earth, the particles in Mars attract the particles of the Earth more vigorously; and the change of attraction is in perfect accordance with a certain law of distance. Moreover we all know that a clod of earth cannot move of itself, and cannot act in a place where it is not. A clod upon this Earth, separated by many thousands of miles from another clod in the planet Mars, can no more pull than push that other clod. To call this a law of Nature *needing no God,* does not alter the fact that there is a Perception and Action from vast distances. But clods of earth or stone have no perception and no power of such action. To assign to Nature this perception and this power, is simply to make Nature the Divine Spirit. This either concedes the doctrine of a God by mere change of name, or it runs into the basest Pagan fetishism by attributing knowledge, accurate perception and mysterious power to masses of stone, nay, to every particle of matter.

If only a few men saw Mind at work in the Universe, they might mistake. The veracity of our *bodily* senses is not certain: they sometimes make mistakes: yet when the senses of many men concur, we accept the conclusions and are satisfied. So is it with our mental faculties. Though no one has consciousness of the mind and soul of another, yet the action of others convince us that others act from design and therefore have minds like to our own: and the universal argument in this belief satisfies us that it is correct. So too our belief that we see a Superior Mind at work in the world is confirmed by the fact that the rest of mankind with great unanimity chime-in: insomuch that Man has been defined as a Religious Animal. I insist, that this direct perception of Superior Mind is similar in kind to our direct perception of Mind in other men. No doubt in the latter case, from the sameness of our wants and instincts, we have far greater ease in tracing the course of mind, and are less in danger of mistaking the direction of design: but this does not interfere with the assertion that in the two cases the process of thought is alike.

But while such is the sole question between us and the Atheist, the argument which convicts him of folly is only a first and very imperfect step towards a Religion worth having. What are the qualities, the power, the purposes of the Spirit whom we discern, and whether there are many such Spirits, are questions for Theists among themselves, with which the Atheist, while he keeps to his argument, has nothing to do. I cannot but think, that if the mist of vain metaphysics were blown aside, simple-hearted working-men would be less liable to the delusion that they are advancing in wisdom by adopting the atheistic theory: and if they saw Theists willing to follow truth wherever truth led, they would have less reason to give special honour to the courage which contradicts man's deep and widespread conviction, that a God above us exists, blessed for ever and the source of blessings.

THE TWO THEISMS.

[1872.]

THOSE who are contending for free thought in religion are contending for a noble prize, and are temporarily united, while that prize is withheld from the public by powerful influences. But the moment they commence to use their freedom, the same thing happens, and must happen, now as always heretofore. Human infirmity clings to all. Each is finite, and sees but partially; hence their judgments are often in opposition. The contrasts of opinion in Greek philosophy, when there was no organized priesthood to forbid or to cripple freedom of thought, were as extreme as now.

Some imagine that, because the schools of material science work on in harmony, and the conflicts of opinion rather assist progress, being but partial and temporary, so will it be in religion, as soon as we resolve to cultivate religious thought scientifically. This might be the case, if materialism were the basis, or if we had foundations recognized by all. But in metaphysics, and in mental science generally, the great discouragement of study has lain in the irreconcilable and fundamental variance of the professors. Materialism and Spiritualism fight together for possession of the schools of morals and of psychology; so also of necessity will they in religion. Those who wish to be scientific are not agreed as to the bases and procedure of the new (religious) science, for which they are hoping in common. Every science has to work out its own problems in its own way. Strong analogies and harmonies are detected between the several sciences after they arise and live; nevertheless each is born independently, and acts independently; nor can any endure dictation from without, though hints and suggestions may be welcome and profitable. Thus, after we have agreed that free thought is necessary in religion, and that a scientific religion is the thing to be desired, we may easily remain as far apart in religious opinion and beliefs as were Stoics and Epicureans; or if our difference be less extreme, it may be rather from holding more negations in common than from agreement in affirmation.

Nor, when people profess to believe in God and call themselves Theists, does this go far to indicate real agreement. The question recurs, What do we mean by God? If we may not give a reply, the word is unmeaning to us, and we deceive ourselves in thinking that we have any belief at all. But as soon as we give a reply,—not as believing that it can exhaust the whole reality, but merely that it may explain our thought,—some one arises to reprove us for presumption in supposing that we can limit the illimitable, and define the incomprehensible. Men who by general suffrage are eminent in some physical science, think forthwith that their physical attainments justify their laying down the law in religion; and we who have broken loose from the dogmatism of the churches find that we have to encounter a new fight for our freedom against the dogmatism of this or that "man of science," who perhaps graciously allows us the field of "the Unknowable" for religion, or not even that; for it is well if the new dogmatist will let us have any belief in a Superior Spirit at all. Nothing is commoner than a shriek of derision against a "personal God." Under the groundless pretence that personality means limitation, or means Anthropomorphy, we are forbidden to believe in a God who has purposes and sentiments. A God *without* either purposes or sentiments is a God in whom we cannot recognize mind at all, and is therefore a blind force or a blind fate. A recent writer of great literary eminence, while fancying that he is about to deliver religion from *sacerdotal* metaphysics, emphatically denies, not the personality only, but even the *unity* of God; thus presenting us with nothing but a plurality of either forces or abstractions, and plunging us into an abyss of metaphysics still deeper—one also out of which no practical religion has ever yet emerged.

Setting aside avowed Atheism and avowed Pantheism (a very equivocal term), even in the apparently more limited form of belief denoted as Theism, there are at least two broadly distinguished schools of thought, between which, if we remain Theists, it is necessary to choose; and the more fully the two can be described and contrasted, the greater will be the aid to students of Free Religion. Indeed one might mark out a third school, the Deism of the eighteenth century. This pourtrayed the Creator as external to his creation, which they supposed him to have endowed with self-acting forces. Matter, in this theory, was either created or endowed with gravitation at a definite time, which may be called the crisis or era of creation; so that the action of God upon matter was convulsive and momentary; but in the nineteenth century this doctrine is almost universally disowned. The smallest acquaintance with the great science of geology convinces every one that the idea of creation as limited to a single crisis of time has no plausibility whatever; that creation is undoubtedly the work of continuous ages, enormous in duration, whatever its mode and progress; moreover, that if God is to be recognized at all in the universe, the great forces which are therein detected by the mental eye are strictly divine forces, and that any distinction between *initial* impulses as divine and *continued* forces as not divine is groundless. This is the incipient reconciliation of Pantheism and Theism.

Nevertheless, our Theism divides itself into two schools, broadly separated, and for convenience it may be allowed to entitle them Greek Theism and Hebrew Theism. Of the former, the great Aristotle was probably a worthy representative; and it commends itself to a great majority of those who are forward to identify their faith with science. The cardinal point of this is that it supposes God to have nothing, in him or of him, but general Law. He may be described as Force acting everywhere according to Law, under the guidance of Mind. He is supposed to be so absorbed in general action as to remain quite inobservant of the detailed results, or at least unconcerned about them. Thus he intends this earth to have day and night, to have vegetation and various animals on it, moreover to have a human population. These generalities he is not too great to design and devise. But it is said, we cannot suppose him to pay attention to any particular *man*, without supposing him to attend to every sparrow, to every oyster, to every stalk of sea-weed, and this (it is thought) would be absurd. He wishes the human race, as a whole, to attain its own perfection, but it is thought puerile to suppose him to attend to each individual; and, as favouritism would be a human weakness, he has no love and no care for any one of us. Conversely then, it would be gratuitous, unseemly, perhaps impossible, for any of us to love him. In accordance with this, Aristotle makes a passing remark—"for it would be ridiculous for any one to say that he loves Jupiter;" not, I apprehend, from his investing Jupiter with the colours of Greek mythology, but from his supposing *no moral relations* to exist between the Supreme God and us. Of course it will follow from that view that human injustice and vice, great as are their mischiefs, are offences against man or ourselves, not against God; hence the idea of "sin against God" cannot exist. God is not supposed to be concerned with the sin of an individual; to confess it to him would be an impertinence which Aristotle never seems to imagine possible. Indeed, the same great philosopher esteems intellectual virtue as higher than moral virtue, on the express ground that God cannot possess moral virtue, which belongs only to the natures which have passions to restrain and direct wisely; nor indeed is it intelligible to ascribe moral virtue to a Being who is wholly solitary, and has neither temptations to resist, nor duties to fulfil. But probably the modern Theists of this class will admit, that, when a Superior Being gives sensitive life to other objects, he creates for himself relations to them and duty to them, especially the duty of justice not to create them for mere misery, or deal inequitably with them; and that two lines of imaginable conduct at once open, according to one of which God would show himself good, and according to the other evil. Hence the epithet *good* attached to God is not idle and unmeaning, but has a real sense. I do not *know*, but I *hope*, that those whom I entitle Greek Theists in the present day regard it as rightful and becoming to *believe* that God is *good*, even while contemplating either that violence of the elements which causes destruction and pain to myriads of his creatures, or the preying of one class of animals on another. That pain and death are strictly necessary, I suppose all thoughtful persons to understand.

But here a caution is needed, concerning the description of omnipotence,—a word which is often gravely misunderstood; insomuch that one may doubt whether it is wise to use it at all. If the word be strictly pressed, omnipotence makes wisdom needless, and leaves to it no functions. We cannot ascribe wisdom without implying difficult problems to be solved; but to omnipotence there can be no difficulty at all, and no problem; a "fiat" suffices. Hence in calling God Wise or All-Wise, we virtually assume that there are limits to his power, even if we know not exactly what. A second consideration shows that cases of apparent impotence in God may be mere inventions of human absurdity. It is a celebrated Greek saying that "the only thing which God cannot achieve is, to undo the past." This does but assert that divine power is out of place in solving the absurd problem of making contradictions simultaneously true; such as, "Alexander conquered Darius," *a past fact*, and, "Alexander did not conquer Darius," *the past fact undone.* Verbal contradictions belong to the puzzle of human thought, and are no problem for power. One who disputes this does not know what he is saying. Even dull minds will find themselves constrained to deny that God can create a God like to himself. To create the uncreated, is a contradiction. This distinction between the uncreated and the created is irreversible. We may advance from this to geometrical considerations. Archimedes discovered that a sphere is exactly *two-thirds* of its circumscribing cylinder. To bring about, by a divine fiat, that the ratio should be *three-quarters* would be to establish a contradiction. To deny that this falls within the sphere of power cannot shock piety. As well might one be shocked at the denial that a geometrical shape can be made simultaneously round and square. Further: mathematicians easily imagine a force of gravitation which shall obey a different law from that of Newton, and in following out the inferences find no self-contradiction. Yet it is more than possible that the Newtonian law is a rigid necessity of the physical system, and that to change it belongs not at all to the sphere of power, any more than to reverse geometrical or verbal truths. Nevertheless, it may justly be feared that some minds, who have credit for "philosophy," ill understand thoughts apparently so simple and obvious; since the late eminent John Stuart Mill committed himself to the declaration that in some other world than this, for aught he knew, two and two might make five; and that he knew "the Whole to be greater than the Part," by experience only:—though it is evidently a verbal truth. But as soon as we understand that the great geometrical and physical laws of the universe are *a condition* under which Creating Power acts, we find abundant room for the profoundest wisdom. When we ascribe Almightiness, it is only a short phrase for saying that "we cannot know the limits of God's power in any of the problems in which power is applicable; and in dealing with *them*, we assume that there are *no* limits." But this belongs to our ignorance, not to our knowledge. The Homeric epithet *Much-mighty* may be preferred by a rigid philosophy to *Almighty*, in speaking of that which transcends knowledge.

The Theism which teaches that there is no definite moral relation between an individual man and his Divine Author, but only between the collective human race and its source; and that the relation is limited to this, that God by creating bound himself to be just to the race collectively,—such Theism does not encourage the individual to any acts of worship, and scarcely to the sentiment of gratitude. Compare the case of a land-owner who likes to have pheasants in his copses. Perhaps he takes some pains to keep away the animals which are destructive to them, and in so far causes the pheasants to increase and enjoy life. But if he does not care for any one of them, neither does he wish any of them to care for him. A Greek Theist was beset by uncertainty whether, if he paid thanks and worship to Jupiter, the god listened to him, or in any sense accepted his addresses; hence, with but few exceptions, we find no mark of moral contact between the Greek soul and the soul of the universe.

The prevalent tendency of Greek philosophy to that which Christians esteem to be pride and self-righteousness, is perhaps to be ascribed to this cause. Man stood erect in the presence of man, with whom he recognized moral relations, and was not awed and abashed by contrasting his own moral imperfection with the essential perfection of God. Mr. F. E. Abbott probably extols this position of the Greek mind as *manliness;* for in his *Impeachment of Christianity*, he has attacked the modern religion vehemently on this ground. He says: "It strikes a deadly blow at the dignity of human nature, and smites men with the leprosy of self-contempt." But the phenomenon was older than Christianity.

I turn to the Hebrew Theism. It recognizes all in God which I have described as Greek Theism, but adds something more, and that of prime importance. It does not suppose that he is absorbed, and as it were exhausted, in general action, but believes that he takes cognizance of individuals also. When Euripides denies that Jupiter attends to the sins of individual men, he argues, as Epicurus after him, that it would give the god *too much trouble.* [*Melanippe Desmotis.*] "If Jupiter were to write down the sins of mortals, the whole heaven would not suffice, nor would he himself suffice, to look into each case and send its penalty." Thus the reluctance of the opposite school to admit that the Most High attends to details, really turns upon an ascription of feebleness to him. The Hebrew Theist maintains that the universal agency of the Divine Spirit is a FACT; and that the division of his innumerable acts into two classes, those which we can refer to a definable law and those in which no general law is discernible by us, is a division made to aid our finite minds. Again, no one regards it as partiality and "favoritism" in the rays of the sun, that they act differently on chemical material differently prepared; nor does it imply "mutability" in God (as objectors tell us), if he act differently on different human souls, according to their state. Hence there is no just *a priori* objection to hinder and reprove that INSTINCT of the heart which casts itself on God in spiritual prayer; nor is it superstitious to believe that he will strengthen our virtue when we flee to him for aid.

To the Hebrew Theist, God is emphatically "a God who searches the heart." He is regarded as dwelling in its recesses, and having (what can only be called) a *joint-consciousness* with the individual man. The worship is prevalently internal and unspoken, however pleasant the sympathetic enthusiasm of common worship when hearts are in unison. In creatures so imperfect as we, and especially in the noviciate of heart-religion, no small part of secret prayer will be, either petition for more strength to fulfil duty, or expression of grief for failures. An axiom of the religion is that *God desires from us* inward and outward goodness, holiness, and righteousness: hence any wilful neglect, any choice of the baser part instead of the better, is accounted not merely to be unjust or vicious, but also to be *sin against God.* I am aware that in the present day men calling themselves Christians have pronounced "sin against God" to be an absurd idea, and alledge that one who asks "forgiveness" supposes God to nourish "unseemly resentment." Such objectors think themselves Christians and are not; nor is the objection just. The longer any one has cultivated religion as an inward life,—the more frequent and more solemn has been his self-dedication before the Divine Spirit to all that is holiest and best,—so much the more certain is he to feel that any wilful deviation is an offence, not *only* against his own soul or (it may be) against a fellow mortal, but *also* against God. If the worshipper on any day have a bad conscience, a cloud seems to hide the serene and glorious presence. If then a keen grief seize him, what matters it whether he use this phrase or that phrase, in seeking to recover his lost ground? A child conscious of wrong asks "pardon" of his father, and does not hereby impute "unseemly resentment;" but he knows he is *disapproved*, and he desires to remove disapprobation, which is to happen through a change in himself, of course, but he is not just then at leisure to study words accurately, and, it may be, he blames himself extravagantly. "We know not what we should ask for as we ought, but he that searcheth hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit," says Paul excellently. Such strivings are not ineffectual, but eminently conduce to moral culture and vital power, however much they may be reproved or disdained by the unsympathising logician, who perhaps has no personal experience in the matter. Alike pointless is the sarcasm that it is hoped by prayer to "alter the purposes and modify the action" of God; and that prayer "asks him to work a miracle." Whatever the weight of this against prayer for things external, it has no application at all to that prayer which concerns the heart of the worshipper only. There is no reason why we should *not* hope that God will act differently on souls that pray and on souls that do not pray; and wide experience reports that he does so. Thus also a definite moral relation is recognized between the Divine Spirit and the soul which seeks his intimate influence; and (however it may be regretted or reproved as sectarianism) the sense inevitably springs up that there is in the human race an interior circle of SAINTS or "people of God;" insomuch that without being able strictly to justify every phrase, still this ancient outpouring of desire sounds as melody to the heart: "Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times. Remember me, O Lord, with the *favour* that thou bearest unto *thy people.* O visit me with thy salvation; that I may see the good of *thy chosen*, and rejoice with *thine inheritance.*"

As two seeds, in aspect alike, grow up into different trees, so the fundamental difference of Hebrew from Greek Theism, on a superficial view small, entails vast moral results. With the Hebrew Theist religion is a signal aid to morality; with the Greek Theist it is no aid at all. Duty is everywhere easier to *know* than to *practice.* It is an old complaint, "I see and approve the better, but I follow the worse." A Greek Theist may be an eminently good man, but no thanks to his religion; for when he encounters temptation, it adds no strength to him. He does not believe that God looks on and approves or disapproves his conduct. But the Hebrew Theist, if he live in the spirit of his religion, lives under the thought, "*Thou, God, seest me;*" and it is harder to go wrong under the eye of a virtuous friend, though he be but a man. This religion is *emotional*, and adds a vital force to morality.

Again: if anyone believe God to love his creatures, no impediment exists in the inequality of natures to loving him in return. I know that modern "Greek Theists" echo Aristotle's incredulity, and call "love for Jupiter" a delusion. Yet undoubtedly we love, for their essential goodness, persons whom we have never seen, though they may not know of our existence; certainly then, if we believe that God knows us, and loves us, and every way deserves love, it ought not to be treated as beyond nature to love him. A prominent and applicable test of love is pleasure in anyone's company—that is, pleasure in a sense of his presence. Though we judge God to be always with us, yet human society or needful absorption of mind in business and duty very largely pre-occupies us; but if at every vacant interval the heart springs back with delight to the remembrance that God is present, such a heart may surely be said to love God. Joy in a sense of his nearness is attested by a long series of votaries in the Hebrew school, which has propagated itself into Christendom and Islam. Well-known Hebrew psalms, to which countless hearts have thrilled and echoed, proclaim the blessedness of "seing God's face" (a strong metaphor) and living under the light of his countenance. As the hart pants for the water-brooks, so pants the "saint" for a sense of *his* presence, whose loving kindness is better than life, whose approval brings fulness of joy.

Thus while Greek Theism is to the individual a mere theory of the intellect, and possibly a science, Hebrew Theism must be something else beside science, namely a life, dwelling in head and heart alike. It attributes to God perfect goodness, perfect holiness—words varying in sense with different minds, yet in all suggesting something high above what the individual has attained. Hence, in spite of dull imagination, low morals, and a necessarily mutilated appreciation of what God really is, the votary in this religion holds up to his heart for worship an object far nobler and purer than himself. If I refer to the poetical tale of Job, who, on getting a mental sight of God, cried out: "Behold, I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes," I may justly be told that this is mythological. However, the prophet called Isaiah in our Bibles said in his own name, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness is but filthy rags"—words strangely treated as a doctrine special to Christians, and tending to undervalue practical righteousness! On the contrary, they are the vehement aspiration of the heart for a higher goodness than its own—a heart utterly disparaging its own attainment in comparison to that which it sees above it, and longs for. But I suppose it will be added, "*If* such self-contempt is *real*, it is debasing; it saps the dignity of man." Yet it is not visible that Luther, or John Knox, or Oliver Cromwell were deficient in manliness, if even they "crawled on the ground" under a sense of their own vileness, contrasted to God's purity. I fully admit to objectors that the inward religion common to Jew and Christian may become *morbid*, namely, by assuming an intensity of grief which (in a weak nature) endangers moral despair. The ups and downs of a much-tempted, much-sinning man, often bitterly repenting, often jubilant with delight—whose sins *perhaps* (like those of the poet Cowper) are unknown to all but himself and hardly believed by others—may entail a mental malady like Cowper's; or, in a more robust and carnal nature, may drive a man into hardened courses. I wish objectors to understand that I see this danger. Nevertheless, as fire may burn us, and could not be the great aid to us that it is if this were impossible, so judge I of that mental contact between the impure soul and its far purer object of worship. The *humiliation* thus induced forbids a man to despise even the most sinful and polluted of his race, makes him tender-hearted and forgiving, preparing him to believe that there is a fertile seed of goodness in those who have plenty of visible imperfection. I strongly deny that such humiliation tends to unmanliness, or lessens human dignity. The vehemence of passion uses strong language—as in love, so in devotion. The "self-abhorrence," which is reproved as debasing, is felt only in the contrast of our darkness to God's purity, and has nothing to do with the comparison of man with man. To "crawl" before man is a loss of dignity, but before God we have no dignity to claim. Surely humility towards God must make us more amiable to man. "To do justly and love mercy" are in sweet concord with "walking humbly with God."

If there is any truth in what I have here laid out, a not unimportant inference seems to follow. A Hebrew Theist (such as I have described), though he believe neither in Moses nor in Jesus, finds true co-religionists in pious Jews and pious Christians; and not in those only who recognize him as "one of their invisible church," but in many who shun him and shudder at him—many whose religion is disfigured by puerile or pernicious error. On the other hand, he may regard a Greek Theist as a good man, a noble man, a man to be esteemed; but he does not find in him a co-religionist; nay, rather regards him as "unregenerate" and needing "conversion." So too the Greek Theist evidently finds nothing in a respectable Atheist, however hard and scornful, to repel him. The difference between these is one of intellectual speculation, and does not at all touch the heart. Thus, I incline to believe, the chasm which in Religion separates *Theists who do* *not worship* and *Theists who worship* is a broad dividing line. Those on this side are co-religionists with Jews, Brahmos, Christians and Mussulmans; those on the other side, are co-religionists with Pantheists (?) and Atheists. When those nurtured in the old national religions unlearn dogmatic authority, all human nature may be united in a common belief of Hebrew Theism, as conscious children of One God. But if we disbelieve our personal relation to God, Religion has lost alike its *restraining* and its *uniting* power. A Theism which is a mere speculation of the intellect may indifferently be asserted or denied. Atheism is morally on a par with such Theism. Of course this is not adduced as any disproof, but only as indicating the practical importance of the controversy.

ON THE
RELATIONS OF THEISM TO PANTHEISM.

[1872.]

THANKS be to God, religious thought is not stagnant. His spirit is in men's hearts: under his constant pressure our intellects struggle forward into more knowledge, more wisdom. We are advancing. Of this the test is, that the more active and higher minds in opposite schools tend toward agreement, though they have not reached unity.

One condition of advancement is, that we should discern our own errors, and unlearn them. This, to a superficial eye, may suggest that our creed is melting away, and that believers in God are becoming unbelievers; but it is not so. Our notions of God from age to age have undergone vast enlargement; hence of necessity we drop from time to time many crude opinions concerning him, which opinions were of old fought for by Theists and opposed by Atheists or doubters. But simultaneously we attain greater richness and nobleness of conception, and towards our brethren who are in opposition a tenderer and wiser sentiment, in so far as their opposition is from diversity of intellect, not from perversity of morals. Without attempting anything so arduous as a history of opinion on these great subjects, a few broad outlines shall be essayed which may have interest.

In antiquity the only school of thought known to us which understood the real magnitude of the universe was practically atheistic; that of Democritus and Epicurus: and with Epicurus this magnitude, having nothing moral in it, could scarcely be called grandeur. A universal storm or curdling of atoms in tens of thousands of worlds, was all that he could see. With the poets of Greece and the vulgar, the gods were not the creators of worlds, but themselves first creations from the mighty power of blind nature; a notion which to us may seem to differ little from atheism. The first gods thus brought into existence were Titans, beings of gigantic powers, but prevalently deficient in intellect. They were conquered and superseded by Jupiter, who, though in the earliest poets represented as a selfish despot, yet disapproved and chastised human wickedness. Hence with the progress of generations, the notion of Jupiter in the purest minds of Greece became little different from that of the chief god with the highest sages of Palestine or Persia.

Meanwhile, Grecian astronomy arose, and in about four centuries attained its fullest perfection in Alexandria. It stopped short in the solar system, of which the earth was made centre. To accommodate the forced geometry thus induced, numerous crystal orbs were imagined, and the stars were compared to brass-headed nails fastened into a far vaster solid vault. This agreed exceedingly well with the old Hebrew conception of a *firmament*, or, as the prophets call it, a sea of glass or crystal. By excluding the idea that the stars are suns, the view of God's universe which midnight opens to us was perverted into a mere show of fireworks; moreover, men were confirmed in the puerile error, that this earth is the divine centre, and sole or main object of divine interest. Learned men among the Hebrews, who received Alexandrian cultivation, enlarged their notion of Jehovah as the God of all nations, and easily harmonized with Greek Neo-Platonism.

Where to place Heaven, the special seat of God, was a difficulty with those who clung to the idea of some such sacred locality. The Greeks appear to have solved it in a most unsatisfactory way, by reverting to the old poetical idea which identified Heaven and God, and interpreting Heaven to be the outermost vault in which the stars are fixed. This, I believe, was prevalent with the Stoics, and it is put by Cicero into the mouth of Africanus, when he means to set forth the most advanced religious notions of his day. "By nine circles, or rather spheres, all things are knit together; of which one which comprises all others, is heavenly and outmost, *the Supreme God himself*, constraining and containing the rest; in whom are fixed those ever-revolving courses of stars; and in a lower region the seven [planets]." Nothing afforded more derision to the Epicureans than this notion of a visible, round, ever-rolling and blazing God; which certainly lowered the Greek Theism of that age.

The point on which the West and the East were prevalently divided, was on the relation of God to Nature or Matter. The authorities esteemed sacred by the Hebrews were in no necessary collision with the philosophic Greeks; for Jehovah was represented as the ever active force in all nature, not only creating originally, but sustaining all action in the elements, in brutes, and in the human mind; in short, to use the modern epithet, he was *immanent* in his own creations. No antagonism was imagined between God and Matter. Miracles were not regarded as a suspension of the laws of Nature, because no sharp idea of Law had been attained; only in a miracle the God who is always at work in matter displayed his ordinary action with more than usual distinctness, that is, in such a way as to manifest his moral judgment. An obvious and vulgar illustration is, when some elementary disturbance is interpreted as a divine interposition. A man is struck dead by lightning, or a high tower is smitten; it must have been because the man had offended God by impiety, or the tower by aspiring to too proud a height. An earthquake or an inundation must have been elicited by the peculiar wickedness of the nation whom it afflicted. A God, who thus dispensed elementary inflictions as moral punishments, was not suspending his own laws, but administering them, if he sent down fire from heaven at the prayer of a prophet, or otherwise wrought through some favoured servant what is called a religious miracle. There is harmony in such a view. In truth a breach of harmony began, when it was taught that the men on whom the tower of Siloam fell were not therefore to be judged guiltier than others; that we must not interpret external calamity as a mark of God's anger; that whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth; that it is folly to run hither and thither, and look about with the natural eyes for marks of God's moral judgments, or expect signs from heaven; but that the kingdom of God is within us. The results of this doctrine were really antagonistic to miracle; but that, for long ages, Hebrew and Christian, was not discerned. God was regarded as not only immanent in Nature, but as obeyed systematically by Nature; who displayed, alike in her broad laws and in her apparently exceptional operations, the moral judgments of her supreme animator. The religious Greek philosophers, however little apt to believe in miraculous interpositions, entirely agreed with the Hebrew prophets as to the harmony of Nature with God who was the cause of all movement, all production, all mental action.

But the Eastern speculators, in Persia and perhaps beyond, prevalently accounted for Evil in the world by the incurable stubbornness of Matter, which could not be brought into obedience to the divine will. Hence with them God and Nature were eternal antagonists; and Matter played the part which Christendom has assigned to Satan, the evil Spirit who is supposed, really and eternally, to defeat God's efforts for the benefit of his creatures. Some say that it was through Augustine, in his youth a Manichee, that these notions were established as the fixed creed of Christians. Be that as it may, we cannot overlook the similarity of the Mediæval creed concerning the cause of Evil to the East, which indeed was far less offensive to enlightened sentiment, perhaps admitted a subtler explanation.

The higher Greek intellect seldom took a course in harmony with Hebrew piety;—perhaps scarcely beyond one very limited school, the Neo-Platonists. Those who had no sympathy with Epicurus or with Atheism, vacillated between two systems; (1) Stoicism, which tried to interpret the popular mythology into consonance with sober reason, (2) the doctrine which we call Pantheism, to which indeed some Stoics strongly inclined. The earliest known origin of this was in India; where it was taught that the eternal infinite Being creates by self-evolution, whereby he becomes and is all Existence; that he alternately expands and as it were contracts himself, re-absorbing into himself the things created. Thus the Universe, Matter and its Laws, are all modes of divine existence. Each living thing is a part of God, each soul is a drop out of the divine ocean; and as Virgil has it, the soul of a bee is "divinæ particula auræ." Some Greek speculators, developing this thought rather coarsely, treated the visible and palpable world as the material body, of which God was the invisible soul. I have read of one, who carried out the analogy so far between the world and a huge animal, as to account for the saltness of the sea, by comparing it to human sweat! To the same class of thought belongs the conception of Æschylus and Virgil, who compare the fertilizing showers of spring to a marriage of Earth and Heaven. However pure and noble this theory may have been in the highest minds, it almost instantly, and as it were inevitably, with the vulgar drew after it a loss of moral character to God. To combine with this doctrine the cardinal Hebrew idea, that God is Holy, was eminently hard: for externally, what see we of holiness? Indeed such Pantheism with great ease lapsed into the old Polytheism. Why not call the ocean Nereus, the sea Neptune, the earth Ceres, the sun Apollo, if they are diverse manifestations of the deity? And if man be himself only God in disguise, how can man be sinful? God in man cannot resist himself. *Man* may be responsible to *man* for his conduct, but no room seemed left for that antagonism of man to God, which Hebrews and Christians call

Sin, and regard as a cardinal fact in religion. Practically it has appeared to Christians, that Pantheism desecrates God and unnerves man; for it relaxes the sinews of the soul, just as does that belief in Necessity which denies the human Will, and represents us as bubbles carried on the wave with no power of self-guidance,—the sport of desire.

The collision of opinion between Pantheism and Christian thought seems to have attained its maximum, when Protestant Europe re-organized its creed concerning God and Creation, under the influences of the Newtonian astronomy. The prevalent belief, which from Christians passed to those soon after called Deists, was, that at a definite point of past time not very distant, God created Matter,—that is, caused it to exist; before which time (some will infer) he must have existed from all eternity in solitude without a world. Upon Matter he imposed certain laws and certain initial motions; and then withdrew from further influencing it,—resting, as the Hebrews said, after six days' work. So he created trees, shrubs, and animals endued with definite powers, and having thus started them in life, left them to themselves and to the elements. Here a very sharp separation is made between God and Nature, though no antagonism is imagined. The Creator constructs a machine, winds up the spring, and then leaves the machine to act of itself. He is wholly external to his own world, not immanent and active in it. The grand material laws or forces which we call Gravitation, Affinity, Cohesion, Repulsion, Electricity, Heat, and so on, are regarded as *qualities of Matter*,—qualities, no doubt, with which God, at a distant moment of time, endowed Matter; but these are in no proper sense divine forces. In this view, a miracle became an exceptional interposition of God, an interference with the laws of matter, for the sake of a moral purpose. Such a theory seemed excellently to maintain, as well the moral character of the Creator, as the moral independence and responsibility of man. In England of the eighteenth century, it held almost entire dominion over those Christians who studied the new material sciences, and over Deists who rejected Christian authority.

A few speculators among us, of whom I believe Cudworth was the chief, struggled in favour of a more comprehensive view, which should embrace all that is noblest in Pantheism, and incorporate it with the Jewish and Christian conceptions of God's Holiness. To do this wisely seems to me the real problem still before us, towards which we have already made very important advances. If to any it seem astonishing that thoughtful men could imagine a God living in solitude for a past eternity, and then suddenly creating a world, a sufficient reply, and probably the true reply, is, that Past Eternity (make what we will of the words) is an inextricable puzzle to the human mind. Those who said, that at a certain time God created Matter and of it formed a world, pretended no knowledge of what had preceded, and ought not to have anything at all charged on them concerning Past Eternity; a topic which speculators of every school ought to confess to be involved, not in darkness only, but in such perplexity that we may well suspect some fundamental error in our notions. The Schoolmen who said that God knew nothing of Time, but that with him Eternity was "a standing point," expressed in their own way their sense that this mystery is inscrutable.

But the progress of science has led men to inquire, What is Matter? and some, like Faraday, tell us, that it is nothing but Force. Atoms, he said, were centres of force,—that is *all*. Few can be satisfied with this naked definition, which seems not only to explode Inertia altogether, but also to be open to Aristotle's objection against Plato's *Ideas;* which objection (in our phraseology) may run thus: that we are required to believe in the existence of an adjective which has no substantive,—in an attribute which inheres in nothing. Nevertheless, it is clear that the *Forces* at work in the Universe have become more and more prominent in our conception than mere inert Matter. Geology teaches to the men of the nineteenth century, that the formation of this globe was no mere spirt of primitive creation, but the gradual product of vast ages; and since it is apparent that in different stages of its development it was peopled by different species of animals, and *that* too, long before man stood on its surface,—it has become necessary to admit, either that Creation was continued through long ages, or even that creation is mere evolution. La Place's theory of the generation of the solar system has almost taken the place of established science, and strains the imagination as to the ages requisite for such evolution. Finally in the stellar system various celebrated nebulæ appear to show worlds in an initial state, which will be developed after countless ages in the future. Out of all this the modern conviction has arisen, that God creates now, and will always create; that his creative action is normal and incessant, and that the notion of a definite era at which he brought the world into being, is as puerile and gratuitous as that of a theatrical "day" of judgment, with God seated on a throne. Hence, whatever "Matter" may be, it seems to follow that it is co-eternal with God; and the thought inevitably presses itself in, that the great forces of the Universe,—Gravitation, Electricity, and such like,—are the means by which Creation and other divine action are carried on. In fact, they seem to be strictly inseparable from the Divine existence. And if what we call Nature is for ever inextricably interwoven with God, we have to make fundamental changes on the Deistical theory of the last century.

Thus, in the course of perhaps eighty years, the pendulum of Theistic thought has oscillated very decidedly towards Pantheism; and there is good reason why the Theists of to-day should be unwilling to accept the name Deist, which confounds their doctrine with that which prevailed in the eighteenth century. How then are we to avoid the characteristic dangers of Pantheism? As I apprehend, by holding fast to the very simple axiom, that *the truth nearest to us and first known must ever be our fixed standing place.* The knowledge of man begins from man, and must not be sacrificed for any after-developments of material science or any speculations about God, concerning whom we have only later and derivative knowledge. The very first certainty which we receive, is, that which the Germans call acquaintance with the Ego and the outer world. The two are learned simultaneously. A sense of resistance to effort teaches the infant that there is an outer world, his consciousness of the effort which is resisted teaches him that he has a Will of his own. He finds that *he can originate action;* in this consists his Will, his personality. One who duly considers that this primitive contrast is the basis of all other knowledge whatsoever, ought to discern the absurdity of trying to obliterate this contrast by after-inference. With ingenious but stupid pertinacity Necessarians try to convince us, that, inasmuch as regions of the material universe in which Chance or Will was once supposed to be dominant, have been found to be subjected to Necessity, therefore the same ought to be inferred of the human Will. This reasoning is as vain, as an attempt to explode the Axioms of geometry by deduction from its remote theorems. The whole fabric then falls in a mass. As well tell us that all life is a dream, as that our primary convictions (the basis of all knowledge) are illusive. Every human language abounds with words of praise and blame, words of moral colour, all of which are illusive, if man moves like a planet in a wholly constrained orbit. Thus we have the testimony of collective

Mankind to Free Will. It is not pretended by us that the will, any more than other force, is of infinite strength; its limit is soon reached: its originating power acts within bounds: but unless man have *some* originating power, all morality is annihilated; to speak of a wicked or virtuous man becomes as absurd as to call a planet wicked or virtuous. Thus when we have learned that the outward universe has its fixed law, we must with Pope admit the sharp contrast,

> (God) binding Nature fast in Fate,
> Left free the human Will.

As the unshrinking maintenance of this is absolutely essential to the foundations of Morality, so too in it lies the reconciliation of Theism and Pantheism. Unless we have a positive ineradicable belief in the human Will,—if we allow ourselves for a moment to admit that this may be illusive,—we lose all reasonable ground for ascribing Will to the Creator, who is presently confounded with blind Fate. A gentleman, my contemporary, who has written and preached in London as an avowed Pantheist, has printed that God creates, not with any design, but because it is his impulse! which will come to this,—"because he cannot help it, and hardly knows what he is doing." Such is the proclivity of Pantheism. But if we start with a belief in the human Will as our first principle, and in Morality as essential to the nature of Man, in contrast to the collective brutes, we instantly find it inevitable to ascribe Will to the superhuman Power in whose actions we see Design, and to ascribe every mental perfection to him, from whom our minds and souls are only derivative. Conscious of the independence of the human will, we cannot believe that we are absorbed in God, or are mere machines moved by him; but we are, in the true and noble sense, *children of God*. Finally, while recognising him as not only a Creator of distant worlds, at a distant time, but as the present Spirit who every moment maintains our life and inspires our energies, we glory in sounding to him the utterance, "Thou only art Holy."

Modern Theists have probably a much more abrupt aversion to the idea of miracle, than had our early Deists. This, as I believe, has arisen from the vast accumulation, in a century and a half, of experience as to the deceitfulness of the imagined evidence for miracles: but students of material science whose Theism is somewhat obscure, often appear to Christians to object to miracles from ground almost Atheistic. The Christian complaint was powerfully expressed by Lacordaire in the following words: "It is impossible, say the natural philosophers, for God to manifest himself by the single act which publicly and instantaneously announces his presence,—by the act of sovereignty. Whilst the lowest in the scale of being has the right to appear in the bosom of nature by the exercise of its proper force; whilst the grain of sand, called into the crucible of the chemist, answers to his interrogations by characteristic signs which range it in the registers of Science; *to God alone it is denied* to manifest his force *in the personal measure* that distinguishes him, and makes him a separate being. . . . . Not only, say they, must God not have manifested himself, but it must be for ever impossible for him to manifest himself, in virtue even of the order of which he is the Creator. Banished to the profound depths of his silent and obscure eternity, if we question him, if we supplicate him, if we cry to him, he can only say to us (supposing, however, that he is able to answer us), 'What would you have? I have made laws! Ask of the sun and the stars: ask of the sea and the sand upon its shores. As for me, my condition is fixed: I *am nothing but repose*, and the contemplative servant of the works of my own hands.'"

On this it may be remarked, first, that Lacordaire's argument is addressed to the Deist of the eighteenth, not to the Theist of the nineteenth century. We do not maintain that God is *nothing but repose.* Few will dare to say (certainly not I) that God is *unable* to manifest himself in forms wholly unlike anything which we have seen. But if I admit to an old Greek or Egyptian that God is *able* to take the form of a bull or a swan, is that a reason for believing, as fact, somebody's tale that he was actually incarnate in a bull? Again, without denying that he *might* be incarnate a thousand times in the form of man, as the Hindoos say, or once, as Christians say, surely this is far enough from admitting the fact. We must have PROOF; and when it is attempted to assign proof, the idea itself vanishes as contemptible. We have to learn outward truths by experience, and among these is the question, By what means God is pleased to reveal his action and his mind? Experience replies, "Solely in the laws of the Universe, and in our inner consciousness." Our minds are a mirror for apprehending his mind, and an aid to interpret his action. What indeed would Lacordaire have? If his demands are just, we may claim a God who will talk with us and teach us, as a human preceptor.

While I strenuously maintain, that incredulity concerning miracles can be *based* logically only on experience of human credulity, and that the proper ground for rejecting the pretended miracles of the Gospels and Acts is the abundant proof of credulity in the writers, with the total absence of evidence that they saw what they presume to tell so confidently (nay, the certainty in most cases that they were repeating mere distant hearsay); yet, in the present development of Theism, another grave reason against belief in miracles seems to me to become prominent; viz., that if the laws of Nature are inseparable from Deity, they must be esteemed as *a part of the Divine existence*, with which it is unimaginable that he should tamper. Where we see nothing but immutability, are we to be scolded as limiting God and denying power to him, because we glorify that immutability, as essential to his perfection? Without miracles he has given us all things needful to life and godliness. We will not dictate to him how he shall be pleased to reveal himself, but are contented to take what we find.

Finally, there is a thought which I wish to drop, as a *reverential conjecture* only, that others may ponder over it, and give it whatever weight it deserves. That forces which I recognize as Divine, should act by fixed laws which display nothing moral, seems to me at first very paradoxical. I inquire, whether the analogy be merely fanciful, or is possibly true, which compares the divine being and the human in this further respect: namely, as Man has in him vegetative force which is wholly unmoral, besides his mind or soul which is moral but invisible; so God, whose moral part is wholly invisible, has, as another part of his being, the material and unmoral laws of the Universe, which are in some sense visible and palpable.

But all such analogies admit diversity as well as likeness in the things compared. Man is unconscious of his vegetative action, especially when it is most healthful: I suggest no such unconsciousness in the case of the Divine action. Indeed, so timidly do I write, that nothing but urgent remonstrance has withheld me from striking out this paragraph.

But I have no timidity as to our duty of borrowing from hostile schools whatever we can honestly borrow. I firmly believe, that our only way to exterminate Pantheism and Atheism, is, by learning all of truth which Pantheists or Atheists hold, and incorporating it with our Theism.

ON

THE GALLA RELIGION.

[1872.]

THE Gallas are a people who live to the south of Abyssinia, in a very low state of civilization. The facts concerning their religion here adduced are drawn from the writings of Lorenz Tutschek,—"Dictionary and Grammar of the Galla Language, Munich, 1844-45." Probably more has been learned concerning them in these twenty-five years past, either by new intercourse, or by studying the numerous MSS. of Karl Tutschek, who died prematurely. His brother, Lorenz, who has edited the Grammar and Dictionary, was drawn into African philology by nothing but the death of Karl; and professes (in 1844) his inability to use to advantage the large materials left in his hands. A sketch is here given of the very interesting account, in order to give the reader confidence that the documents here laid before him, however fragmentary, are authentic.

Duke Maximilian of Bavaria redeemed four young negroes at an African slave mart, and brought them to Germany for education, supposing them to be three Nubians and one Abyssinian. He secured for their tutor a young jurist, Karl Tutschek, who had been distinguished in linguistic study, and was acquainted with Sanskrit, Hebrew, and Arabic. After about ten weeks, Tutschek at length discovered that they were neither Nubian nor Abyssinian; that three of them had only been a year away from home, and were of excellent capacity. The youngest had forgotten most of his language and of his people, and was depressed in mind by the circumstance. They belonged to the four nations, Galla, Umale, Darfur, and Denka, and communicated with one another, very imperfectly, in vulgar Arabic. After a while, he excited in them the desire to impart to him all that they could tell of their homes and countries, sometimes in reply to direct questions, sometimes in connected narrative suggested by him or originated by themselves. The Tutscheks do not hesitate to ascribe to these compositions, which were wholly oral, "great solidity and elegance, as to style, contexts, and arrangement," notwithstanding the youth of the narrators. Lorenz accounts for this by reminding us that the art of relating is cultivated by oriental people [by illiterate people ?], and that those children of nature are from earliest childhood eminently observant of external things, and closely acquainted with the circumstances of their villages and tribes. Karl Tutschek directed his chief study first to the Galla language, spoken by Akafade, which appeared to be best vocalized and easiest; but Lorenz applies to the Yumale negro (Jalo Jordan Aré) the epithet *highly gifted.* Three volumes of his dictations were in Lorenz's hands when he wrote. He adds that they "deserve the praises that have been bestowed on their sterling worth as to form and contents, and bear the impression of mature judgment and critical truth." They are divided into such as are the reproduction of the excellent memory of Jalo, and such as are his own free compositions. Jalo declared himself to be nephew of Wofter Mat, hereditary king of the Yumales. But the Gallas alone here concern us.

On January 2nd, 1841, in a sitting of the philosophical class at Munich, Karl Tutschek read a report of his investigations, and laid before it a tolerably complete dictionary of the Galla Language, a sketch of the Grammar, and many dictations, prayers, and songs. He had received from M. Jomard of Paris, a treatise on the Galla language, extracted from the bulletin of the Geographical Society, August, 1839, which in many ways confirmed his own results. He even found in it prayers of the Gallas, nearly agreeing with those dictated by Akafede. What was better still, he gained two months' intercourse with a second Galla, named Otshu Aga, who had been delivered from slavery by Mr. Pell. By him not only all that he had learned was confirmed, but materials were given for comparing two dialects of Galla, and the number of dictations, prayers, and songs was increased. Otshu and Akafede presently became warm friends, and at Tutschek's suggestion, entered into correspondence. Hereby he got fourteen letters, valuable alike for philology and for exhibiting the mind and soul of the correspondents. Further, through Otshu, an African girl by name Bililo was introduced to Tutschek. She had been supposed Abyssinian, but was really from the Galla country *Guma*, and had taught Osthu Aga many of her songs, which Tutschek noted down. A fourth native Galla, Aman Gonda, who had been brought to Europe by Duke Paul of Wirtemberg, was visited by Tutschek. He had been a magistrate under the service of his prince, had been better educated, and appeared to speak his own language correctly. For these reasons, Tutschek set much value on his communications.

The chief occupations of the Gallas are agriculture and cattle-tending; but subordinate to these, in their villages, are weavers, tanners, potters, leather cutters, and workers in metal, who furnish warlike instruments. The form of government is royalty; but, as separate tribes have different kings, the king seems to be not much above the Arab chieftain. The royalty is generally hereditary, but is occasionally changed by election. Their religion is a monotheism, penetrating deep into all practical life, but obscured (says Lorenz Tutschek) by many superstitions. This is only to be expected; but no superstition appears in his specimens of their prayers, which with a few verbal changes of mere English dialect, are the following:

Morning Prayer.

O God, thou hast brought me through the night in peace; bring thou me through the day in peace! Wherever I may go, upon my way which thou madest peaceable for me, O God, lead thou my steps! When I have spoken, keep off calumny [falsehood?] from me. When I am hungry, keep me from murmuring. When I am full, keep me from pride. Calling upon thee I pass the day, O Lord who hast no Lord.

Evening Prayer.

O God, thou hast brought me through the day in peace; bring thou me through the night in peace! O Lord who hast no Lord, there is no strength but in thee. Thou only hast no obligation. Under thy hand I pass the day; under thy hand I pass the night. Thou art my Mother; thou my Father.

LITURGY

After the Sufferings of a Bloody Invasion.

Good God of the earth, my Lord! thou art above me, I am below thee.

When misfortune comes to us; then, as trees keep off the sun, so mayest thou keep off misfortune. My Lord! be thou my screen.

Calling upon thee I pass the day, calling upon thee I pass the night.

When this moon rises, forsake me not. When I rise, I forsake not thee. Let the danger pass me by.

God my Lord! thou Sun with thirty rays! when the enemy comes, let not thy worm be killed upon the earth, but keep him off, as we, seeing a worm upon the earth, crush him, if we like, or spare him, if we like. As we tread upon and kill a worm on the earth, so thou, if it please thee, crushest us on the earth.

God, thou goest, holding the bad and the good in thy hand. My Lord! let us not be killed. We, thy worms, are praying to thee.

A man who knows not evil and good may not anger thee. But if once he knew it, and was not willing to know it, this is wicked. Treat him as it pleases thee.

If he formerly did not learn, do thou, God my Lord! teach him. If he hear not the language of men, yet will he learn thy language.

God! thou hast made all the animals and men that live upon the earth. The corn also upon the earth, on which we are to live, thou hast made. We have not made it. Thou hast given us strength. Thou hast given us cattle and corn. We worked with them and the seed grew up for us.

With the corn which thou hadst raised for us, men were satisfied. But the corn in the house hath been burnt up. Who hath burnt the corn in the house? Thou knowest.

If I know one or two men, I know them by seeing them with my eye: but thou, even if thou didst not see them with the eye, knowest them by thy heart.

A single bad man has chased away all our people from their houses. The children and their mother hath he scattered, like a flock of turkeys, hither and thither.

The murderous enemy took the curly-headed child out of his mother's hand and killed him. Thou hast permitted all this to be done. But why so? Thou knowest.

The corn which thou raisest, thou showest it to our eyes. To it the hungry man looketh and is comforted. Yet when the corn bloometh, thou sendest into it butterflies and locusts and doves. All this comes from thy hand. Thou hast caused it. But why so? Thou knowest.

My Lord! spare those who pray to thee. As a thief stealing another's corn is bound by the owner of the corn, not so bind thou us, O Lord! But thou, binding the beloved one, settest him free by love.

If I am beloved by thee, so set me free, I entreat thee from my heart. If I do not pray to thee with my heart, thou hearest me not. But if I pray to thee with my heart, thou knowest it, and art gracious unto me.

The inquiry suggests itself, How old is this religion of the Gallas? It contains no trace of Mohammedan, nor yet of Christian influence. God is, in their belief, as Lorenz Tutschek observes, the One Supreme, almighty, all-knowing, all-wise, and all-good. No prophet, no angel appears. If the religion were an independent reform originated in modern times,—Theism, superseding Polytheism,—one might expect some prophet's name to be connected with it. *Primâ facie*, the probability seems rather to be, that it is contemporaneous with Hebrew Theism and akin with the old Abyssinian religion; perhaps, also, with that of Sheba, which was the S.E. corner of Arabia.

In a paper read before the Philological Society of London in 1847, I tried to show the relation of the Galla Verb and Pronouns to those of other known tongues; and claimed for the language a place in the class which Prichard has styled Hebræo-African. This class, besides the group related closely to Arabic and Hebrew, comprises the Abyssinian language, those of Mount Atlas and the Great Western Desert (of which the Zouave is now the best known), and perhaps even the ancient Egyptian.

We know that the old Abyssinian language, called the Gheez, differed little from Hebrew, and that there was an ancient sympathy between the Hebrews and Sheba (where Jewish princes ruled, in the time of the Maccabees), also between Judæa and Abyssinia. It may be thrown out for further inquiry, whether possibly a common Theism was maintained, a thousand years before the Christian era, in these three countries, and also in that of the Gallas.

ROMANISM
A CORRUPTION OF CHRISTIANITY.

[1872.]

To The Editor of The Index:
DEAR SIR,

YOU send to me your little pamphlet, "Truths for the Times," and invite me, if I understand you, to say whether I agree with it. I am sure you desire that every one will speak his mind out, and therefore I say, shortly, that I agree *substantially*, and in all that is properly *religious;* but I do not agree in all that is historical and critical, concerning which, it crosses my mind (but I say it diffidently and under correction), that the element called *odium theologicum* may unawares sway you. *Of course you understand this phrase.** Theologians are charged with hating most the doctrines which, without entire agreement, come nearest to them, and enduring more easily an extreme enemy than an almost-friend. So, it is my surmise, you ill endure Unitarian Christianity, and are better inclined to admire Romanism. I regard your opinions concerning Romanism to be unhistorical, unjust and pernicious. This is the point to which I address myself. My text naturally consists of the paragraphs which you number twenty-six and twenty-seven. In twenty-six you say that the process which developed the Catholic Theology and Hierarchy "was not, as is claimed, a corruption, but a natural and logical development." Here, I maintain, there is a false contrast. Grant that it was "a natural and logical development;" it will not thence follow that it was *not* a corruption. Nothing is easier than that it should be both.

If indeed a system is perfectly harmonious within itself, all *truly* logical deductions from parts of it will for ever be in harmony with it, and cannot be corruptions. Yet even so, a disproportionate dwelling on one side of a moral system may so distort its practical results, as to have quite the effect of positive error. But if (as happens to all human systems) inconsistencies *are admitted into a*

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* Wonderful to say, Mr. Abbott by his reply showed that he did *not.* 1887.

religion unaware to the founder, then the most logical developments may be most unjust and disastrous corruptions. John Wesley firmly believed in ghosts; Jonathan Edwards in reprobation; Calvin in the right and duty of religious persecution; Paul saw nothing in slavery that needed a religious protest. If you choose to select the weak points of great and good men, and "logically develop" them, you may produce portentous and hideous errors, which they would have been the first to disown and denounce; which also are violently opposed to their most cardinal teachings. This, I maintain, is to *corrupt* their doctrine. Their sound sentiment kept a controul over their erring intellect; the mere logician who "develops" their errors overthrows the balance. He may do good service in confuting them; but if he pretend that his "developments" are what the preacher intended, he is false and absurd.

Next, the pretended logical developments which produced Romanism are in the most vital points utterly illogical. Coleridge admirably said that the worst errors of the Church of Rome were generated by mistaking rhetoric for logic. "This bread is my body; this cup is my blood." If Jesus ever actually used these words (which is not to me a historical certainty), he undoubtedly meant it as a strong metaphor. The author of the Fourth Gospel, apparently wishing to reprove the very gross interpretation already rising in the church, represents Jesus as saying it on a wholly different occasion (John vi. 33, 51, 53, 54) and as reproving the material literalism (vi. 63) with which he was understood. Although the Catholic Church has accepted the Fourth Gospel as the writing of the Apostle John, and as pre-eminently valuable, nay, as the sole sufficient basis for Trinitarianism, yet with the grossest stupidity, if not base policy, it has built up Transubstantiation on the texts in the first three gospels.

Again, the worship of the Virgin, and her elevation to an almost divine position, is a logical development out of their other development, which had made a God of Jesus; but it has not a shadow of foundation in Biblical Christianity. I surely need not argue this point.

Then, Trinitarianism took nearly four centuries to elaborate, and nothing can be more illogical than the processes used. First a "Canon" of Scripture is arbitrarily settled, and every part pronounced of equal value and certainty. Books wholly anonymous, and claiming for themselves no special dictation by God, are pronounced to be the divine handiwork; and then are commented on and interpreted in the illogical spirit of Rabbinism. The plainest words are forced out of their sense to make them agree with other texts somewhere else. The Hebrew Scriptures are pressed into the service, and all their rhetoric is accepted as logic, *whenever convenient*, and applied quite uncritically, and, as every Jew will say, falsely. The most positive texts which declare the human nature of Jesus are set aside by the most *illogical* assumption that contradictions can be and must be simultaneously believed. Human ignorance and weakness (it is pretended) do not exclude Divine omniscience and power. Read the "Athanasian" creed, and ask whether it is "logical." That spurious creed is pre-eminently the creed of the Latin Church of Catholic Rome; the Greek Church was never so frankly illogical. How any opponent of Rome can praise her for her consistent logic, I have never been able to understand, except in the sense of our acute Scotch divine, Dr. Campbell, of Aberdeen, (author of "Lectures on Ecclesiastical History,") who says that Rome, with eminent consistency, in a long series of ages, always took that side in every controversy which would best aid in building up her *Power*.

When you say (paragraph twenty-two): "Christianity is the historical religion taught in the Christian Scriptures and illustrated in the history of the Christian Church," I find a double fallacy. First, you assume that the history of the Christian Church *illustrates* the religion taught in the Christian Scriptures. I judge, on the contrary, that it most certainly *obscures* and *depraves* it. Next, you speak of "the religion" taught, as if a consistent system were taught. I allow and maintain that much was held in common; but the most prominent doctrines held by James and Paul in common have been thrown over entirely by the Christian Church for sixteen centuries. (To this I shall return.) Also there were strong diversities between James and Paul. Here the Catholic Church and the Roman Church have laid hold of just so much as they pleased, to incorporate and develop. Moreover the Historical Church, since the second century, stands on a totally different foundation from the Apostolic Church—I might perhaps say from the Church of the first five generations. Spiritual freedom and absence of an authoritative letter was the apostolic basis; a Canon and an authoritative Hierarchy are the Catholic basis. The religion preached by Jesus, by James, by Paul, by Peter, by John, so far as we can learn what is genuine, was above all things a *personal* religion, addressed to, and to be judged of by, the individual conscience; a religion in which the human soul came into direct and personal contact with the divine. The Catholic religion is essentially a *corporate* religion, in which the individual soul is receptive of what the priest or "Church" says or does. According to its theory the individual in himself has no spiritual life, or judgment, or contact with God: all depends on sacerdotal intervention.

I say, one has but to read the New Testament, however cursorily, to see that the religion preached by Jesus and by every apostle was a strictly personal religion. Individuals were called on to listen with their own ears, to judge by their private judgment, to cast aside the creeds or ceremonies in which they had been educated and as it were born, and devote themselves to a nobler morality. Judaism and Christianity alike attracted converts by purer and higher doctrines presented to their intellects and consciences: and nothing can be more opposed to this than to pretend with the Church of Rome that private men must not judge of doctrine, but must look for an external body which is to judge in their stead. No such submission was made to apostles in their lifetime as has been claimed after their death. The first preachers of Christianity called their hearers to believe in God or in a *heavenly Christ;* the Romish preacher calls on them to believe "in the Church." (I shall say more of this afterwards.) Paul invited men to spiritual freedom and counted it his main business "to minister the Spirit," "the Spirit (as he calls it) of wisdom and revelation;" that is, to develop in them a power of spiritual judgment. On the contrary, the Church of Rome invites us to become spiritual slaves, dependent on the priest or director. Paul looked with extreme scorn on hereditary ceremonies, and declares that even those of Mosaism, which he believed to have been from God, are carnal ordinances and are repealed by the mere fact of a Christian's higher spiritual teaching. The Church of Rome loads us with ceremonialism and every kind of frippery, from a Cardinal's gold brocade to the Holy Coat of Treves, which, with the approval of the Hierarchy, was in our recent memory carried in procession, accompanied by the solemn cry, "Holy Coat, pray for us!"*

Paul did not preach to his heathen auditors about any sacred book. The books of the New Testament were not written; those of the Hebrews were not held out by him to the Gentiles as authoritative. The Church of Rome grounds her pretensions on two or three misquoted texts of the New Testament, and, having thus established her right over the hearer's conscience, kicks the book away, as far as he is concerned. Moreover, however dogmatic in form and tone the precepts of Jesus are, as now handed to us, it is certain that Jesus never intended those precepts to become a sacred letter to future and distant nations; else he must inevitably have taken precautions that his words should be accurately committed to writing and revised by himself. He evidently never thought of providing us with *a new authoritative code;* for he has left us to guess, as we best may, who wrote what has come to us, and when, and with what means of knowledge; and nothing can be critically clearer than that much presented to us is variously erroneous. The Unitarian Christians, who discern the great inaccuracy with which the words of Jesus are reported, seem to me more logical, more just, more reverential, in sifting and rejecting and holding much with a loose hand, than Catholics and Bibliolaters who insist on sticking to the letter. The Church system, built up on the New Testament, ever since the last quarter of the second century, is necessarily quite different in spirit and in basis from that which prevailed before the books of the New Testament were written. Paul's rule (1 Cor. xiv. 29) is: "Let two or three prophets speak [at a single meeting of the church] and let the rest [the private members of the church] *judge between* [them]." Even prophecy, which he so extols, was not intended to supersede the individual judgment. "Try the spirits, whether they be of God," is the doctrine ascribed to John.

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* So at least the public press in that day told us.

I said that the Church of Rome grounded her pretensions on *two or three misquoted texts,* in contrast to the statement of paragraph twenty-six, which calls her development "logical." I must verify my words.

The first weapon in her armory is the text—"Hear the Church,"—utterly, absurdly and ridiculously misquoted from Matthew, xviii. 17. Jesus is speaking of two men who have quarrelled, and the authority here vested in "the Church" is not that of pronouncing upon religious doctrines, but of adjudicating in suits at law. He did not speak in Greek, but in the vulgar Hebrew; and it is even possible that by "the Church" he meant the Jewish Synagogue; as James in his epistle (ii. 2) calls the Christian Church—"your synagogue." I say, it is *possible* that Jesus was teaching the Jewish hearers not to go to law before the

Roman tribunals, but to be satisfied with the decision of the synagogue. However, the compiler probably thought that Jesus spoke prophetically of the Christian Church which was to be, and that the precept was practically idle and useless to the immediate hearers. Let us admit that Jesus did speak it, and that the narrative as we have it is correct (though both may be doubtful); what then follows? Why, that in the celebrated formula of the verse immediately following—"Whatsoever ye shall bind in earth shall be bound in heaven,"—Jesus meant simply that the verdict of the Church in worldly quarrels between her members ought to be received as ratified by God; the "Church" being not a hierarchy, but the *ecclesia*, which means a democratic congregation. Catholics have perverted the meaning of the Greek word *ecclesia*.

And now for the second cardinal text of the Romanists: "Thou art Peter; and upon this Rock will I build my church; and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, &c., &c." (Matt. xvi. 18, 19). Suppose that Jesus really uttered this extravagance; to whom did he give this supernatural power? Clearly to Peter. Does he say anything of Peter's *successors?* Nothing. There is, then, no basis here for any continued hierarchy, even if the Church of Rome could make out (which she cannot) that she is Peter's heiress. I find nothing whatever "logical" in this attempt to step into Peter's place.

Besides which, logic ought surely to criticize. To vest in any man the keys of the kingdom of heaven is in violent contrast to the entire teaching of Jesus; and in the Apocalypse (i. 18) Jesus is represented as saying—"I have the keys of Hades and of Death;" and again more pointedly (iii. 7)—"I am he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and *no man shutteth*, and shutteth and *no man openeth*." The Apostle John, whose genuine writing this is, can have had no suspicion that Jesus had given this key to Peter. Also in the "Acts of the Apostles" it is abundantly manifest that no one, at the time of its composition, had any idea that Peter held this wonderful supremacy over all the apostles, and that the church was built upon him, any more than that Jesus was a person of the Divine Trinity. And how does Peter himself speak in his first epistle (which I suppose to be genuine)? Does he assume any special authority? Nay, but he says—"The elders who are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, not to be lords over God's heritage, but ensamples to the flock." And of the Christian people collectively, he says: "Ye are a chosen generation, *a royal priesthood*, a holy nation, a peculiar people, &c." No single element of sacerdotalism appears throughout. If it be denied that this epistle is genuine, yet at any rate it is very ancient, and contains the doctrine received by the Church as Peter's in the second century certainly, earlier than the subjection of the Church to any hierarchy or code.

These two texts, "Hear the Church," and "Thou art Peter," are the foundation stones of the Roman Catholic Church. Grant her the authority of these texts, and her interpretation of them, and she wants no more of the New Testament. Thenceforward she is supreme arbitress and has sufficient resources from the Holy Spirit within herself. It may be necessary for me to confirm what I said above, that Rome does not demand belief in God or Christ or indeed in any definite doctrine, but only belief in the Church. This is most clearly seen in the doctrine of *Implicit Belief*, which few Protestants understand. It was fully discussed in the Council of Trent. The difficulty to be met was this. Some doctrines of the Church are so puzzling that pious Catholics are liable unawares to fall into heresy. A man means to be a good Athanasian, but unluckily he is so stupid as to receive the Nestorian or the Eutychian heresy—or something else which the Church has anathematized—supposing himself all the while to be a pious Athanasian. Will he then fall under the awful curse of the Church and of God? The reply is "No; for although he has not explicit faith in the true doctrine, he has implicit (or *virtual*) faith, inasmuch as he *means* 'to believe what the Church believes;' and this gives to his implicit faith all the *merit* of explicit faith." Thus we have the doctrine laid down, that it does not signify what pernicious heresy, cursed by the Church, a man believes, if he do but believe in the Church. Naturally, therefore, I deny your twenty-seventh paragraph, which calls the Romish doctrine the most *perfect* form of Christianity.

I have yet to remark on one grand and cardinal doctrine, characteristic of the whole early Church, which the Catholic Church has rejected. It was the kernel and heart of Christianity with James, Paul and John—the belief in the speedy return of Jesus in the clouds of heaven, to set up the kingdom of God on earth and overthrow all the heathen royalties. The first resurrection of saints was to take place at this crisis, who were to be joined with their heavenly Master in judging (*i. e.*, governing) the world. This doctrine kept the first Christians in great indifference to all political events and all attempts to improve the course of the world. To take *out of* the world a people chosen for God was their sole and sufficient task. To live looking for and hastening unto the coming of that day of God, to keep the faith until Christ's appearing, to wait for God's Son from heaven, to be patient unto the coming of the Lord, to love his appearing—were perpetual exhortations of the apostles; and were enforced by the declaration so often attributed to Jesus, "Behold, I come as a thief." It was inculcated that those were "the last days," "the last time;" that "the time was short." The doctrine pervades the New Testament;* and most efficacious it was to string up the early Christians into an unearthly exaltation, in which they should live for religion alone, be indifferent to kinsfolk, to country, and to life—take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and even covet the crown of martyrdom.

But such a religion was not made to last. It was disproved and worn out by the mere passage of time. In the second and third century it began to yield; in the fourth the millennium, the first resurrection and the reign of the saints, was exploded, though so clearly taught in the Apocalypse and assumed by Paul. No moderns can recover the state of sentiment, judgment and belief, which actuated the Church of the first two centuries. Our very astronomy and geology suffice to make it impossible. But I think it very unjust to deny that of all Christian sects the Unitarians come nearest to *the Church of Jerusalem* in its general doctrine. The Epistle of James and Acts of the Apostles suffice to prove it. The Unitarians do not much agree with Paul; but the doctrine of Paul was vehemently, indeed violently, rejected in the primitive centre of Christianity, which was for a while most influential; and it ought not to be forgotten, especially considering how prominent and important the doctrine of an eternal Hell has been with the Catholic Church, that the Unitarians were the first in modern times to renounce this, and that according to any just interpretation of Romans xi. 25—36, the doctrine was no part of Paul's belief. From not understanding this, Augustine, Luther, Calvin and those who are called Calvinists, have done great injustice to Paul's doctrine of election. Paul believed in universal salvation, in the last result, though in the earlier stage there was arbitrary election.

I fear I have been rather diffuse in expounding the ground of my difference from you on this historical question. I think it very mischievous that we, who stand outside of Christianity and seem to be impartial judges of Christian sects, should give moral aid to the most pernicious by far of them all, by avowing that its system is a legitimate development and the perfect form of Christianity. Perhaps you esteem Jesus more than I do. I could not use the language of your paragraph 18. Yet I writhe with a sort of indignation at the assertion that the Church of Rome logically carries out his doctrines. I judge much of his moral teaching to be exceedingly mean, and much of it fanatical and mischievous; all of which Rome has greedily appropriated. His claim to be Messiah has drawn after it results which he did not foresee, and cannot have wished. I do not palliate the gravity of his error. But to regard a hierarchy, a corporate religion, an outward ceremonial, an earthly kingdom and enslavement of the mind to a code, to be the legitimate development of the religion of *him* who said, "Be not any of you called Rabbi [Teacher], for all ye are brethren; and call no man your Father upon Earth, for One is your Father who is in Heaven;"—does seem to me a great perversion of the narrative, and in the present state of the Christian mind a hurtful error.

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* Nay, I must except the fourth gospel, the Epistles of John the Elder, the Epistle of Jude, and second Epistle of Peter (so-called), all produced in the second century.

THE TRUE TEMPTATION OF JESUS.

[1872.]

EVERY one who has opened the New Testament is aware that in the first and third Gospel a remarkable story is found (alluded to also in the second Gospel) in which the devil is represented to have assailed Jesus with three special temptations, and to have been repelled by quotation of Old Testament texts. That it is impossible to maintain the literal truth of this account has been reluctantly conceded by writers, who, like the author of "Ecce Homo," are wholly unconcerned to ascertain when, where, by whom, and with what means of knowledge, these narratives were penned. Those who desire to save their credit, try to rid them of a damaging burden by declaring this scene to be *allegorical.* No spectator is pretended. The idea that Jesus communicated such inward trials to his disciples is contrary to everything which is reported concerning his character: for he is everywhere represented as wholly uncommunicative, self-contained, more or less mysterious, and moving in a separate region of thought and feeling from the disciples. Evidently this story does but express the *opinion* of the first Christians, while Jesus was as yet believed to be only human, that he, as others, *must have* had a struggle against temptations, and therefore, against the devil. It is not here intended to point out what is plain of itself, that none of the temptations are worthy of the acumen attributed to the experienced and wily Satan; and are merely puerile in fiction, whether Jesus be imagined as the Second Person of the Divine Trinity or merely as a great and holy, but human prophet. Here I intend to give prominence to that which I believe to be the fundamental trial of a religious reformer, especially when he attains great ascendancy and commands high veneration. But first I must say, I shall be truly sorry, if any Trinitarian read these pages, and find himself wounded. I do not address him. I argue on the assumption that Jesus was subject to human limitations like all the rest of us, and that it is our duty to criticize him and the story of him, if it be of sufficient importance.

What are the temptations of the prophet, can be no secret in the present day: we see them in the ordinary life of the admired preacher. To be run after by a multitude, to be ministered to by fascinated ladies, to see grey-haired men submissively listening and treasuring up words,—easily puffs a young preacher into self-conceit. In one who has too much strong sense to be drawn into light vanity, fresh and fresh success inspires, first, the not unreasonable hope or belief that he is fulfilling a great work, and is chosen for it by God, (not for his own merit, but because if a work is to be done, some one must be chosen for it); next, an undue confidence in the truth and weight of his own utterances, an extravagant conviction that whoever resists his word, impugns God's truth, and makes himself the enemy of God. In the denunciations of Luther against Zuingle, his own wiser and more temperate coadjutor, in the vehemences of John Knox, in the cruelty of Calvin to Servetus, we see variously developed the same dangerous tendency. If we cast the eye eastward, to more illiterate nations, to those accustomed to revere the hermit and the semi-savage as akin to the prophet, to peoples whose homage expresses itself by prostration, we see the tendency of the prophet to assume a regal and dictatorial mien even in the garb of a half naked Bedouin. Many an eastern monk or prophet, Syrian, Persian, or Indian, has been obeyed as a prince; some have been attended on by large armies: to some the native king has paid solemn obeisance. In ancient Greece, where philosophy overtopped religion, ascetic philosophers have been accepted as plenipotentiary legislators; in which, no doubt, we see portrayed, on a small scale, the legislative influence of a Buddha, a Confucius, or a Zoroaster. When an Indian prophet found it natural for multitudes to kneel to him or to prostrate themselves, how hard it must have been to accept such homage and retain a sense of human equality! how hard not to think it *reasonable* that others bow down, and *unreasonable* that any stand up and argue with the prophet as his equal!

In the Gospels and Acts the habit of prostration among these nations is sufficiently indicated; and we see how it is resented (according to the narrative) by Peter. When Cornelius falls at Peter's feet and does homage (certainly intending respect only, not divine worship), Peter regards it as quite unbecoming from a man to a man. But Jesus is represented as accepting such homage without the least hesitation, and apparently with approval. The cases are not few, nor confined to any one narrative. Matt. viii. 2, "There came a leper and worshipped him." Matt. ix. 18, "There came a certain ruler and worshipped him." Matt. xiv. 33, "They worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the [*or* a] Son of God." Matt. xv. 25, "Then came the woman and worshipped him, saying, Lord! help me." On this Jesus comments approvingly, "O woman, great is thy faith." Matt. xvii. 14, "There came a certain man, kneeling down to him and saying, Lord! have mercy on my son!" Matt. xx. 20, "There came the mother of Zebedee's children, worshipping him." Matt. xxviii. 9, "They held him by the feet and worshipped him,"—this is after the resurrection, thereby differing in kind from the rest. The same remark applies to verse 17. We have substantially the same fact in Mark i. 40; v. 6, 22, 23; vii. 25; x. 17. In the last passage the rich young man kneels to Jesus: he was not so represented in Matt. xix. 6. Luke v. 8, "Simon Peter fell down at Jesus' knees." Luke v. 12, "A man full of leprosy fell on his face, and besought Jesus." In Luke vii. an account is given, perhaps not at all authentic. A woman is represented to bathe the feet of Jesus with her tears, and wipe them dry with her long hair, and after that, anoint them with ointment and kiss his feet incessantly. Jesus, according to the narrative, highly applauds her conduct, and avows that "*therefore*, her sins, which are many, are forgiven." Such conduct on his part is far above criticism, if he was either a person of the Divine Trinity, or a superhuman being, who existed before all worlds and all angels, being himself the beginning of the creation of God. I cannot doubt that the writer, called Luke, believed Jesus to be superhuman, and therefore found no impropriety in the conduct here imputed to him; but I do not understand how any one who regards him as a human being, can fail to censure him in the strongest terms, if he believe this account. As I see special grounds for doubting it, (inasmuch as it looks like a re-making of the story reported in Matt. xxvi. 6—13, which it exaggerates), I lay no stress upon it: but even in that other account there is a self-complacency hardly commendable in a mere man. Again, in Luke viii. 47, we read, "the woman fell down before him." She does not fall down in Matt. ix. 22; therefore, here also the story may have been "improved" by credulity. But it is needless to follow this topic further. Suffice it to say, that though we do not know exactly how much to believe, though we have frequent reason to suspect exaggeration, yet the narratives all consistently represent Jesus to have received complacently an unmanly and degrading submission from his followers, such as no apostle would have endured for a moment; and it is hard to believe that such reports could have gained currency, with no foundation *at all.* If, therefore, we are to criticize Jesus on the belief that he was man, and not God, nor a superhuman spirit, we must admit, I think, that a real and dangerous temptation beset him in this matter. He was prone to take pleasure in seeing men and women profound in their obeisance, prostrate in mind and soul before his superior greatness;—for prostration of the body brings satisfaction to pride, only as it denotes prostration of soul. It is difficult, with these narratives before us, to think that Jesus took to himself that precept which Peter gives to the elders, that they be not lords over God's heritage, but be subject one to another, and clothed with humility, that they may be ensamples to the flock. Indeed, unless we utterly throw away all the narratives, it is hardly too much to say, that this is the very opposite to the portrait of Jesus. If we will accept the theory that he was superhuman, we can justify his immeasurable assumption of superiority; but the fact remains, that in places, too many to reject, he puts himself forward as "lord over God's heritage."

Two classes of facts, presented in the narratives, must be carefully separated. The former is the general superiority asserted by Jesus for himself; the latter, is the special assumption of Messianic dignity. On the latter, there is notoriously an irreconcilable diversity of the fourth gospel from the rest. The writer of the fourth, unquestionably ascribing to Jesus pre-existence with God in some mysterious way, and sonship in a sense perfectly unique, represents his Messiahship as notorious to John the Baptist, to Andrew and Philip, from the very beginning, says it was avowed by Nathanael (whoever this was), and preached by Jesus to Nicodemus and to the woman of Samaria. All this is in so flat contradiction to the three first gospels, that nothing historical can be made out of the account; and in trying to attain a true picture of Jesus, I necessarily set aside the fourth gospel as a mischievous romance.—Nevertheless, the element which I call an assumption of *general* superiority, is as complete and persistent in the three first gospels as in the fourth.

Keshub Chunder Sen entitles it "a sublime egotism" in Jesus, to say, "Come unto *me*, and I will give you rest: take *my yoke* upon you, and learn of *me*, for I am meek and lowly in spirit." Yet if Luther, or John Knox, or Wesley had said it, we should adduce it in proof that he was eminently lacking in that very grace,—lowliness of spirit,—for which he was commending himself. But is this the only egotism ascribed to him in Matthew? Nay, but in the celebrated beatitudes of the sermon on the Mount, which some esteem the choice flower and prime of the precepts of Jesus, he winds up with, "Blessed are ye when men shall speak evil against you falsely *for my sake*." He does not say "for righteousness' sake," if the narrative can be trusted. The discourse continues like itself to the end, for in the close he says: "Many shall say to me in that day, Lord! Lord! have we not prophesied *in thy name*, ... and then will I profess unto them, *I* never knew you: depart from *me*, ye that work iniquity." This is, it may be said, a very energetic way of declaring, that no pretence of following in his train as a prophet could compensate for personal iniquity. As such we may accept it: but it remains clear, that he is claiming for himself a position above the human; such as no *beauty* or *truth* of teaching could ever commend, as rightful in a man towards men, to the conscience of those reared in the schools of modern science: while of course, if he claimed to be higher than man, the first reasonable necessity, and therefore his first duty, was to exhibit the proofs of supernatural knowledge and authority. Undoubtedly, the alternative lies open of disbelieving the Evangelist. It may be urged, that the text represents Jesus as also saying that in his name they will claim to have cast out devils and done many wonderful works; but that this is an exaggeration belonging to a later time, and so therefore may the pretensions be, with which it is coupled. Well; so be it: let us then look further.

According to Matt. ix. 6, Jesus claimed power to forgive sin; he brought on himself rebuke for it, but proceeded to justify himself by working a miracle. Whence did his disciples get the idea of his advancing such extravagances, if really he did not go farther than his disciples James and John? Presently after, he is represented as preaching that he is the bridegroom of the Church, in whose presence the disciples cannot mourn, and therefore ought not to fast; but that when he is taken away, then they will fast. How very peculiar and strange a sentiment to invent for him, if it was not uttered! Does it not rather seem to have the stamp of individualism and truth, thoroughly as it is in harmony with the tales of his rejoicing to see men and women kneel before him?

Next when Jesus sends out twelve disciples to say, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," he is represented to assert, that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for the house or city which has not received his messenger. Surely, if any one were now to knock at our house door with such a formula of words, and on the strength of it expect to be accepted with the honours of a prophet, only the weak-minded would give him pleasant reception. Yet no ground whatever appears for believing that there was anything to accredit such messengers *then*, any more than *now;* certainly nothing more appears in the narrative, which quite consistently everywhere holds, that Jesus regarded the non-reception of *his messengers* as a super-eminent guilt, merely because it was *he* who sent them.

When it is added, "ye shall be hated of all men *for my name's sake*," we are perhaps justified in esteeming that prediction as an after-invention of popular credulity. But in the same discourse (Matt. x. 23) we alight for the first time on the remarkable phrase, "The Son of Man," afterwards indisputably applied by Jesus to himself. "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come." No one but Jesus himself ever calls him the Son of Man. Whatever he then meant, the book puts into his mouth yet more of *sublime egotism.* "Whosoever shall *confess me* before men," (says he), "him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven: but whosoever shall *deny me* before men, him *will I also deny* before my Father which is in heaven. He that loseth his life *for my sake* shall find it. He that receiveth you receiveth *me*, and he that receiveth *me*, receiveth Him that sent me." Certainly, when we begin to pare down these utterances, and try to reduce them to something that would not be highly offensive in James or Paul, we seem in danger of cutting away so much that is characteristic, as to impair all confidence in what remains. But unless we are bound to reject the pervading colour of the narrative, I feel it not too much to say, that in a mere man, the self-exaltation approaches to impiety. What can it concern any of us, that his *brother-man* should "deny him" before our common Father? How suddenly would the honour which we felt for a preacher be turned into grief and disappointment, or even indignation, if we heard him to say, "Blessed is he, whoever shall not be offended *in me!*" He would fall in our esteem, from the highest pinnacle to a very low place, nor could any pretence of "sublime egotism" save him.

In the same chapter in which the last words occur (Matt. xi.) the Evangelist goes on into language not dissimilar to that of the fourth gospel. "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son but the Father: neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son; and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." In Luke x. 22 are the very same words and more before them. When it is considered that, although the nucleus of Matthew's gospel probably existed before the first century was ended, we have absolutely no guarantee that the text was finally settled, as we now have it, much before the time of Irenæus, toward the close of the second century; no one has a right to be very confident that this passage, so strongly smacking of the doctrines which won ascendancy in that century, was not introduced at a later time. Perhaps the more reasonable course here, is to strike out verse 27, (about the Son and the Father) as foisted upon Jesus by a later generation. What then shall be said of the words which follow, already quoted, "Come unto *me*, take *my yoke* upon you, and *I* will give you rest?" I can accept them, if he is God, or a pre-existing Mighty Spirit. I cannot accept them if he was only man: I then do not entitle them sublime at all, but something else.

Something or other to the same effect is for ever cropping up in this narrative of Matthew, which I purposely take as giving a more human representation of Jesus than Luke or John. He is presently reported to say (Matt. xii. 6), "In this place is one greater than the temple . . . . the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath day." Unless his words have been monstrously distorted, he intended to assert that he was *himself* that Son of Man spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, that he was personally greater than the temple, and was Lord even of the Sabbath-day. Will any one say, that Jesus merely claimed the right possessed by *every man* to interpret the law of the Sabbath by the dictates of good sense, and that he regarded *every* pious man as greater than a temple built of stone; and that the egotistic form of his utterance was an accident? In that case it certainly was a highly unfortunate accident, and we may add, an accident often repeated, which generated in his disciples a veneration for him too great for humanity. But accident so systematic is surely no accident at all. If a good man who makes *no* pretensions is worshipped as a god after his death he is guiltless: but if a MAN be worshipped as a god who has made enormous personal pretensions, —and if a decisive weight in the argument for worshipping him is, that *he has left us no choice between worship and reprobation*, can one who regards the superhuman claims untenable, doubt that self-exaltation and monstrous vanity was a deplorable foible in the prophet? I find only two ways of avoiding the disagreeable inference: (1), by the theory of Paul, or some higher theory; (2), by *so* rejecting all our accounts of his doctrine and miracles alike as untrustworthy, that nothing is left us to trust at all, nothing on which a faithful picture of Jesus can be founded.

From beginning to end the narrative has but one colour as regards the self-exaltation of Jesus. Matt. xii., "Behold! a greater than Solomon is here." Matt. xiii., "Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see the things which ye see, and hear the things which ye hear. Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear." And what was this so precious instruction? the Parable of the Sower! Surely no sober-minded person can esteem this so highly above all the teaching of Hebrew sages.

But I pass to a new topic in the sixteenth chapter of Matthew,—the anger of Jesus, when he is asked for a sign from heaven. He replies by calling the persons who asked him *hypocrites*, when evidently, according to the notions of that age and nation, it was a most reasonable and proper request. He says: "A *wicked* and *adulterous* generation seeketh after a sign," as though the desire itself were wickedness, "and there shall be no sign given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas." And he left them and departed. Such words refuse a sign not to the individual only, but to the generation. Are we then to believe that he consistently repudiated all pretence of working miracle? that he esteemed the desire of seeing a miracle wrought, in confirmation of his pre-eminent claims, to be such a fatuous absurdity, that he had a right to heap contumelious epithets on the head of any one who asked for it? In favour of this opinion, appeal may be made to the epistles of Paul, who does not betray any knowledge whatever that Jesus had wrought miracles. Let us tentatively adopt this view. Then, first, what a heap of gross misrepresentation is put before us in all four narratives if Jesus not only never affected to work miracles, but even vehemently flouted the idea itself and rebuked those who desired it. Next, it will follow that *no justification of his high pretensions was even attempted by him, and therefore no denunciation of men for neglect of him was reasonable.* Necessarily then those resolved to justify him must cut out all his denunciations likewise. Who will write for us an expurgated gospel, to let us know what was the true Jesus? Who will convince us, that a history thus garbled can ever be truly recovered, or deserves our intent study?

In the same chapter of Matthew (the sixteenth) the momentous question is proposed to his disciples, "Whom say ye that I am?" According to the narrative, he first gave them the hint, what to reply, by a leading question, "Whom do men say that I, *the Son of Man*, am?" but perhaps that is only a stupid exaggeration of the narrator, who did not see what it would imply. Let us then drop this portion of the words. He feels his way cautiously with the disciples, and sounds them. Simon Peter replies, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Again I ask, Is this narrative grossly and delusively false? or may we trust a vague outline? According to it, Jesus is lifted by the reply into a most exalted state, "Blessed art thou, Simon son of Jonas," says he, "for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. . . . . *I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven*,* and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, . . . &c." After this outburst, what is it that we read as a consequence? "Then charged he his disciples that *they should tell no man* that he was Jesus the Christ."

It seems utterly irrational and unworthy alike of the most High God and of his specially anointed Prophet (if one special Prophet was indeed so promised), that Messiah should come into his nation,—should expect subjection of mind from all around,—should haughtily evade, instead of enlightening, those who mildly inquired into his claims to authority; finally should sedulously preserve his incognito, and forbid his disciples to tell that he was Messiah. Men may be either convinced or commanded. To convince them you must kindly and candidly answer their difficulties, and allow them to argue against you; you must meet their questions as plainly and honestly as possible, not browbeat or threaten the interrogators, nor marvel over their unbelief and stupidity. You must descend in the argument on to a perfect level with the man whom you desire to convince, and entirely lay aside all airs of authority, even if you have authority. That is one course of proceeding; but is the very opposite of that imputed to Jesus. But if men are to be *commanded*, if *submission* is to be required of them, you must make some display of POWER.* In that case you seek to convince them, not that a precept is wise, or a doctrine is true, but that you, its enunciator, have a special right of dictation, drawing after it in the hearer a special duty of submission. Of course, those with whom the idea of miracles is inadmissible, do not ask for signs from heaven; not the less must they justify the countrymen of Jesus in requiring from him *some* credentials, when he claimed submission and used a dictatorial tone. If the nation believed miracles to be the marks of Messiah, and was in error, it belonged to Messiah to unteach them the error, and, as one aware of their folly, to take precautions lest miracles be imputed to him. Surely it was quite unjustifiable, to require *submission* from Priests and Pharisees, yet exhibit to them *no credentials whatever* of the mighty function with which he was invested. If words dropping from the mouth of Messiah were divine commands, which it was impious to dispute, nothing could supersede the public annunciation of his office, and the display of his credentials whatever they might be. No evasions are here endurable, on the ground of the political danger to be incurred, or the propriety of giving insufficient proof in order to try people's "faith." To say that political danger forbade, is to say that God sent Messiah insufficiently prepared for his work, and afraid to assume His functions publicly. As to trying "faith" by insufficient proof, nothing can be less rightful or more pernicious. If the proof adduced be of the right kind and appropriate, it cannot be excessive, but may be defective; and if defective, it is a cruel trap, as if designed to lead honesty astray. The only plausibility in this notion rises from confusion of truths which we ought to see by light from within, with truths which can only be established from without. No man can know by his inward faculties that a Messiah is promised from heaven, nor what will be the external marks of Messiah. To accept lightly any one as Messiah was the height of imprudence, and certainly could not be commended as pious. Under such circumstances, to dissemble Messiahship, and work upon susceptible minds by giving them evidence necessarily imperfect, was conduct rather to be imputed to a devil, than to a prophet from God, if done with serious intent. Those who defend it, plead that the evidence was moral, and did not need external proofs. If so, on the one hand full freedom of investigation was needed, not authority and brow-beating; on the other, this alledges external proof to be worse than superfluous,—to be in fact misleading; so that to plead for its "insufficiency" as a needful *trial* of faith is a gross error. If external evidence was wholly inappropriate, the producing of that which you concede to be insufficient does but tend to confuse and mislead the simple-hearted, and cause unbelief in the strong-headed. But if external evidence is admissible and appropriate *at all* for faith to rest upon, then it ought to be in quantity and quality sufficient to make the faith reasonable and firm. If only internal light is to the purpose of faith, and external evidence was not wanted for Messiah, then neither was an *authoritative Messiah* wanted at all; that is, a teacher to whom we should submit without conviction; *then* it was right to claim that Messiah would convince by argument and reply to questions; would invite question or opposition, not dictate and threaten; then we have to sweep away the greater part of the four Gospels as a false representation of Jesus. Whatever else may have been true, one thing is certainly false;—that God sent a special messenger to teach *authoritatively*, and that the messenger thus sent forbade his disciples to publish his character and claims.

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* Any one who doubts whether Jesus ever uttered such words, may fortify the doubt by opining that the words have got into the gospel from Rev. iii. 7, where nevertheless Jesus, so far from giving the "power of the keys" to any apostle, retains the power strictly in his own hand. The words in Rev. iii. 7, are borrowed from Isaiah xxii. 22, which have no reference to Messiah at all, according to any scientific interpretation.

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* Men of science appeal to POWER as an argument why they should be believed, when want of leisure or talents forbid the mastering of their arguments: thus Astronomers appeal to their fore-knowledge of eclipses, and their power of finding the longitude by their tables; Electricians appeal to the telegraph, and so on.

From narratives so disfigured by false representation, (as every one is obliged to confess them, who does not believe the miracles, and seeks to defend Jesus by remoulding the accounts of Him;) how can any one be blamed for despairing to arrive at accurate and sound knowledge concerning his character and teaching? What right has any one to expect to recover lost history, or to think worse of his brother if he regard the effort to be waste time? Yet if I were to say, I seem to myself to know *nothing* of Jesus, I should speak untruly; for in the midst of the obscurity and the inconsistencies of the narratives, there are some things unvarying, many things very hard to invent, and others unlikely to be invented, yet easily admitting explanation, if we reason about Jesus as we do about every other public teacher or reformer. The details of doctrine are often untrustworthy, but the current, the broad tendencies, the style and tone of the teacher, seem to have made too strong an impression to be lost, though round them has been gathered a plentiful accretion of mistake and fable.

Now if we accept to the full the traditional Jewish belief of what Messiah was to be (which falls short of the dignity ascribed to him by Christians), it is incredible that after commencing his public functions he should remain ignorant of his being Messiah, or need confirmation from his disciples or from others. But if Jesus had little trust in learned Rabbis or traditional doctrine, he may have had a very vague and imperfect belief as to what Messiah was to be; and the idea that he himself was Messiah may not have at all occurred to him, until after he had experienced the zeal of the multitude, and was aware that a rumour was gone abroad among the people, that "a great prophet had arisen," and that some said he was the Messiah. Can any one study his character as that of a man, subject to all human limitations, and not see that the question, "Am I then possibly the Messiah?" if at all entertained, instantly became one of extreme interest and anxiety to Jesus himself? Indeed from the day that it fixed itself upon him for permanent rumination his character could not but lose its simplicity. Previously he thought only, What doctrine is true morality? What are the crying sins of the day? But now his own personality, his own possible dignity, became matters of inquiry; and the inquiry was a Biblical one. He was brought hereby on to the area of the learned commentator, who studies ancient books to find out what has been promised and predicted about a Messiah. An unlearned carpenter, however strong and clear-minded while dealing with a purely moral question, was liable to lose all his superiority and be hurtfully entangled when entering into literary interpretation. Wholly to get rid of traditional notions was impossible, yet enough of distrust would remain, to embarrass fixed belief and produce vacillation. Nothing is then more natural, than that the teacher should desire to know what was the general opinion concerning him, should be pleased when it confirmed his rising hopes, should be elated when Simon Peter declared him to be Messiah, and should bless his faith, even if not with the extravagance of giving him the keys of the kingdom of heaven; finally, should be displeased with himself and frightened at his own elation, and, in order to repair his error, should charge his disciples to tell no one that he was Messiah; not that he desired to keep the nation in ignorance, but because he was himself conscious of uncertainty. After this his conduct could not be straightforward and simple.

Such is the only reasonable interpretation which I have ever been able to see, of this perplexed and perplexing narrative, which is not likely to have grown out of nothing. Jesus came into a false position from that day, and of necessity (as I think) his whole character must have changed for the worse. Thenceforth, the dogmatism which may have been a mere form of teaching, and involved arrogance chiefly in appearance, changed into systematic personal assumption. Some may doubt whether he began it so early, or ever carried it so far, as even the narrative of Matthew pretends; for as a caricaturist exaggerates every peculiarity of a face, making its prominences more prominent, so does tradition deal with the popular hero. I pretend not to know how much is exactly true; but it comes before me as certain fact, that the true temptation of Jesus was the whisper made to him, "*Are not you possibly the Messiah?*" and by it the legendary devil overcame him. That whisper has cost to Europe an infinite waste of mind and toil, no end of religious wars, cruelties, injustices, anathemas, controversies, without bringing any sure advance of religious truth to mankind. How much more convulsion of hearts and entanglement of intellects, how vast and violent political upturnings are inevitable, before European nations can now become able to learn that to think freely is a duty, and that religion is spiritual and rational, not magical and supernatural?

ON THE
HISTORICAL DEPRAVATION
OF
CHRISTIANITY.

[1872.]

CHRISTIANITY is not the only religion which has undergone depravation. Side by side with it Mohammedanism has developed its celibate fakirs and its traditions, directly or indirectly against the doctrine of the prophet. The Parsee religion has been corrupted by apathy, ignorance, and contact with Hindooism, and Parsee reformers look back to the earlier state for purer doctrine. Hindoos also alledge, and in important points have proved, that moral enormities in their creed and practice are a later depravation; insomuch that a school has arisen which appeals to the Vedas or ancient Scriptures against modern error. Finally, in the farthest east and north of India the Buddhist religion has undergone change, damaging additions, startling developments, which remind every one of Christianity. Its first preacher and eminent founder has been deified, an enormous apparatus of monks, nuns, and holy orders has grown up, with a materialistic worship utterly opposed to the spirituality of its origin.

There is a philosophy now abroad among the opponents of Christianity, which charges upon the religion whatever evil has been historically introduced in it. The main purpose of this tract is to consider under what form such charge is justified, and where it is unjust.

I.—But before entering on the general question, I wish to deal with a special accusation, which I perceive to be made very widely and persistently. I copy from a book which I just now opened at random:—"The tenets of every man's religious creed determine, more or less, the precepts of his morality. He whose creed includes salvation to its recipients and damnation to doubters and unbelievers, *is of necessity a persecutor*." This is part of a chapter with which I on the whole agree, while I strongly deprecate this mode of attack as unjust and untrue.

The vague phrase *more or less* makes it impossible to deny the former sentence; yet the theoretic and the practical morality of every nation are far more influenced by national law and history, by literature and science, than by its religious creed; and, in turn, the current morals modify the creed. Next, at no time did any Christianity known to me teach that all its recipients would be saved. "Repentance of sin" has always been taught and held to be as needful as "faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." To do evil that good may come has always (in theory) been held sinful. However intense a Christian's belief that rejection of Christianity is a damnable sin, that has not the slightest tendency (according to any good logic) to turn him into a persecutor. I want to know, Was the man who wrote this charge ever a Christian himself? If so, had *he* the heart of a persecutor then? I do not believe it; yet I cannot account for his inability to understand how the case presents itself to Christians who abhor persecution, as I think all earnest Protestants do. It may be of interest to state what arguments were used (to my personal knowledge) *from within the Anglican Church* in the years 1827-29, in favour of admitting Dissenters, Catholics, and Jews, to an equal participation of all civil and political rights. Of course it was seen that they applied equally to Hindoos and Mussulmans in India; but indeed that was not in contest. It was urged:—

"Christians who happen to be English have the political rights of Englishmen, just as Paul had Roman citizenship from his birth; but it is not *because* we are Christians that we have any right to State-power. We can claim nothing to which every Pagan would not be equally entitled; for imagine that some spiteful opponent had attacked Paul by saying, that if Christians could get the opportunity, they would eject from the Senate and from all the posts of administration every adherent of the old religion, and ask yourself how Paul would have replied. Would he not have rebutted the charge as a slander showing utter ignorance of Christianity, which teaches that *our citizenship is in heaven?* 'Christ's kingdom is not of this world; we have no more right to oust Pagans from posts of honour than to deprive them of their goods. If we could use power better than they, perhaps also we could use money better than they; but this will not justify despoiling them. We claim *our* rights as men and equals. In order to rob us of these, it is pretended, most falsely, that we do not concede to *others* the rights of men and equals.' Such, surely, would have been Paul's reply."

A fortiori, like arguments apply to the direct persecution of a misbeliever. "I claim to announce Christianity anywhere and everywhere. If I were to preach in Turkey, and a Mussulman were to imprison me for it, I should feel and judge that he was unjust. If he may not use violence against me for uttering my convictions, neither may I against him for uttering his convictions. To persecute him for it would be sin in me; and *my sin would be worse than his error*. To kill him for his error would be *murder* in me. If his error is a wickedness, God is his judge; but I am not. Who made me judge over him? Where does Jesus or an Apostle command any private person or any magistrate to use violence against the teachers of error? Did the Apostles teach that magistrates or any hierarchy bear the sword to enforce religious truth? Nay, but Paul says that a Bishop must be no *striker*. And again: 'The servant of the Lord must not *strive*, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing opponents, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.' James not only agrees with Paul, but goes beyond him. 'The wise man, full of knowledge, is to win over opponents by good works and meekness of wisdom, which is pure, peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated.' James will not permit even denunciations, but declares that these furies of the tongue are set on fire by hell; and that if a man cannot keep his tongue with a bridle, his religion is vain."

In my youth and early manhood, I believed (or supposed myself to believe) that there was an eternal hell in which the wicked would be punished, and a perverse rejection of Christ I held to be wickedness. Nevertheless, this never suggested to me, nor could have suggested, that it was right for Christians to touch by legal punishment or restraint those who taught a foreign religion or atheism. To justify persecution by logic from the New Testament would have appeared to me then, as it does now, to be wholly puerile. I am amazed to find people quote, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord," as an argument why Christians *must* believe it right to use the sword against unbelievers; whereas it is Paul's argument for the very contrary. Not only so, but if the case had happened—which certainly never did—that I met a Christian reasoning *from the Scriptures* for persecution, I should unhesitatingly have said that the doctrine was essentially opposed to the whole spirit of Christianity, and was therefore incapable of proof by quoting detailed texts.

Nothing but a confusion of the Old Testament with the New led the Puritans astray, and the Independents set them right before long. Hooker and his contemporary Anglicans, I think were free from this specially Puritanical confusion.

The doctrine of persecution I hold to be *a depravation* of Christianity, to which the New Testament affords no countenance. It rose out of human passions—pride, self-confidence, impatience, love of power, and other still baser motives, all vehemently condemned by the original Christian doctrine to whichever of the earliest Christian schools we look.

II.—I return to the more general question. We see how early the *elements* of monkery and nunnery, of ceremonialism, of episcopal power, of saint-worship, and other errors, can be found within Christianity. Are we therefore to treat full-blown Romanism as the *legitimate* unfolding of Christianity?

Those who say Yes appear to me to confound two things—the erroneous logic *natural* to an ignorant age, and *legitimate* logic. Given the Roman world in its actual state, in which the more educated stood aloof from Christianity in disdain, while the uneducated, the busy, and the slaves flocked into it, perhaps it is strictly true that, with such materials and circumstances, the downward course of Christianity into grossly carnal ordinances, a monstrous creed, and priestly rule, was *inevitable*. But this has no tendency to disprove the assertion that the new system was a depravation and essentially different from the original; and that to pass it off as Christianity is a portentous misrepresentation.

I gravely deprecate forms of speech which must seem to Protestants a wild injustice. They earnestly desire to hold fast the original Christianity. It is fair and right to tell them that they do not go far enough back, or to show them the difficulties of their search; and there is nothing in this to irritate them. But to declaim against *Christianity*, and mean by the word simply *Romanism*, puzzles them on the one side, or, on the other, insults them by identifying their religion with an essentially different system, which they disclaim, perhaps abhor. When it is notorious that in the course of history the tendency of every national religion is to change, and often for the worse, there is no ostensible fairness, no plausibility, in accepting the latest state as truly exhibiting the *essence* of the first. Neither, therefore, *on the face of the matter*, has the critic a right to adduce the later stage as an aspersion on the honour of the earlier.

I have carefully written, "*on the face of the matter.*" But an assailant may alledge, that the depravations are not accidents; that if the logic of the historical development was weak, the weakness was largely caused by errors essential to the religion from the first. If he can prove this, he may justly maintain, that the later state, though a depravation and not a legitimate development, is still a solid objection against the original teachers.

The closer the history of Christianity is canvassed, the more undeniable does it appear, that its tendency to depravation was caused by its diligently fostering the spirit of credulity as a religious duty. If it be said, as above, in excuse, that the highest intellect of that age never entered the Christian Church,—that it was peopled by slaves and an uneducated mass, who hung on the lips of a few pious but narrow-minded teachers,—the reply is at hand, that neither Jesus nor the Apostles went the way to bring educated men into the Church. Whether Jesus laid claim to miracles, may be doubtful; but those who believe that he did, will not say that he used any method likely to convince the educated of their truth. He did not even leave behind him an authenticated copy of his precepts and doctrine. So long as James and Paul speak on purely moral subjects, we find plentiful reason to admire and honour them; but as soon as Paul begins to expound the Old Scriptures, the intellectual weakness of his Rabbinism warns us at once *why* he could not make converts among educated men; yet his failures, instead of suggesting to him that his logic was unsound, makes him only moralize, like a modern Mussulman, on the mysterious wisdom of God, who hides divine truth from the wise and prudent, and reveals it to babes. Indeed, the words, as I now quote, are ascribed to Jesus himself.

I do not think any candid person can deny that the first teachers of Christianity quickly despaired of converting any but the ignorant. They invariably addressed men's *consciences* only, as if there could be no such thing as legitimate intellectual doubt, which needed for removal arguments addressed to the *intellect.* What can be more inconsequential and pointless than the historical rhapsody imputed to the inspired Stephen? What less fitted to remove the reasonable hesitations of a thoughtful and good man than the addresses in the book of Acts ascribed to Peter and Paul? Paul at Athens is said to have moved incredulity by announcing a *future day,* on which God would judge the world by the intervention of a Man; and the only evidence he offers of the truth of this is, that God has given *assurance* of it by raising that Man from the dead. Although the book of Acts is not the same thing as Paul's own epistle, this sketch is in general harmony with his doctrine and method. We see distinctly, in his 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, ch. xv., where he undertakes to reprove and refute those who deny the future resurrection of the body, how little understanding he has of the evidence required by his case. That Jesus was risen, he probably did not need to prove, but only to show that this entails the resurrection of mankind; yet in his own way he undertakes to prove both. On neither topic is he aware how entirely unsatisfactory is the evidence which he offers. Those who know anything of Socrates or Aristotle may easily imagine the blank astonishment of those good and wise men, if such proof had been laid before them as adequate. The resurrection of Jesus, if a fact, was a physical fact, addressed to the common intellect, and no way a spiritual truth, to be judged of by spiritual discernment. But Paul, after a short and rapid assertion that Jesus had been many times seen after his death, and that, last of all, he himself had seen him [of course, in a vision or trance], rushes into a close and animated argument, on which evidently is his chief dependence. They *must* believe the resurrection of Jesus, he says; for if it be not true, they will lose all future reward for present sacrifice, and all motive for preferring virtue to vice. (What would King Hezekiah have said to this astonishingly base argument?) Nay, he adds, they are "yet in their sins," if Jesus is not risen; as though deliverance from the power of sin were not a matter of fact to the spiritual man, of which he is himself conscious, and a sufficient judge! Thus he reduces to a minimum ordinary evidence concerning an outward fact, which in no other way can be sustained; and overbears an inward spiritual fact by a simple dogma! If it be said, that when he wrote, "Ye are yet in your sins," he meant, "Ye are unforgiven;" it is obvious to reply that Hebrew Psalmists and Prophets had long taught that God forgives all sins hated and renounced by the sinner, and does not make forgiveness depend on His raising some one from the dead; nor did Jesus ever assert such dependence. In the second place, the resurrection of Jesus, if a fact, took place under totally different circumstances from that of men whose bodies have "seen corruption," that is, suffered dissolution; and the *argument* from the one to the other is not complete, even as an analogy. Paul indeed does not define what he means by "resurrection," while he scolds as a "fool" any one who understands him literally.

While the paucity of cultivated men in the Church is a theme of pious exultation, "lest any flesh glory," at the same time even in Paul, noble and heart-stirring as his moral tone is, we cannot but see that he is far quicker to denounce and threaten unbelief, than to meet doubts with patient candour. This element reigns through nearly all the New Testament. I gladly except the Epistle of James, which is almost free from dogmatic elements, and wish to believe that in this respect also he represents Jesus to us. Yet Matthew, Mark, and Luke agree in ascribing to Jesus haughty denunciation, where it appears least justified. It is not practically possible to reach a Christianity in which intellectual doubt was kindly welcomed and candidly satisfied. It is always treated as a sin, and easy faith magnified as a high merit. This, I apprehend, is the fatal fact which ensured corruptions through the triumph of credulity in the Church.

Fancy and folly, bad logic and blundering, haste and love of the marvellous, are ever at work to deform every oral tradition, and pervert the interpretation of whatever is written. The only check upon their inroads lies in keen and jealous criticism. To commend easy belief as a virtue, and frown on slowness to believe as a dishonour to God, was certain to entail illimitable error, burying out of sight the original doctrines. If easy belief in a newly-announced marvel is meritorious to-day, so will it be to-morrow, so will it be next year: hereby a premium is offered for a harvest of lies. From the beginning, the merit of believing things wonderful was distinctly proclaimed; in the third century it was frankly applied to believing things incredible. The reasoning faculty, unless kept in constant exercise, withers as certainly as the hand or the arm. While we approach God mentally, or seek moral edification devoutly, argumentation is lulled to sleep: hence if devotion absorb the mind wholly, free intellect gets no play. To foster criticism is the only sure way of holding fast attained truth, not to speak of advancing to new truth. To scold down free thought prepares the corruption of a religion by weakening the mind of the votaries. When Infallibility is ascribed to any set of enunciations and statements, every flaw in a noble discourse becomes its most admired feature, and is most insisted on, *because* it is difficult to believe,—*because* it mortifies "that beast Reason," to use Luther's vehement phrase. The doctrine of Infallibility, which is the head and front of Popery, is but the consolidation of the authoritative tone of teaching which was originally made a supplement to defective argument. It is a familiar thought, that if the earth, without human labour, bore to us, as in a fabled Paradise, milk and honey, fruits and crops, clothes and shelter, our bodies would be enfeebled by laziness and inaction. Just so do our minds become torpid and weak, when truth is guaranteed to us authoritatively. Infallibility, whether in a Church or in a Book, such as shall supersede criticism of the things asserted, is as little to be desired, and as little to be expected, in Theology as in Morals or Politics. No form of Christianity has shaken off its incrustations of error, except where Free Science has arisen to exercise and brace the spirit of criticism. The noble moralities of the New Testament will stand out more admirable and more valuable, when surrounding error is purged away: but until this work of criticism is performed, and the dogmatic principle disowned, the spiritual and moral will continue to be drowned in the ecclesiastical. Depravation and schism, anathema and recrimination, must be expected in the future, as in the past.

THE CONTROVERSY ABOUT PRAYER.

[1873.]

SOME have said that religious knowledge is not progressive: with about as much truth we might say that medical knowledge is not progressive. On each topic mankind has made enormous errors, and on each is still very far from a sound and satisfactory state; yet on each it has left many errors far behind.

Primitive theology is man's interpretation of the outer world which he perceives; and his interpretation is largely influenced by his consciousness and his emotions. Enlarged and improved knowledge of the universe almost necessarily modifies theology, as does the improved moral culture of nations. Religion therefore (in its popular sense of "thought concerning God"), unless artificially stereotyped by nationally established creeds and by sacerdotal authority, must everywhere tend to improve, as nations become nobler in morals, or in breadth and accuracy of knowledge. So strong indeed is this natural tendency, that we do in fact trace this improvement, in spite of hierarchies and domineering institutions, and sometimes in the higher minds, even in spite of public demoralization. Theological opinion, and the interpretation of generally received doctrines, cannot but undergo change, when the ascendant system of (what is called) metaphysics changes; much more, when, as in the last three centuries of Europe, acquaintance with the outer world has been immensely enlarged and at the same time become beyond comparison more accurate.

But the mass of the population in Christendom is very far from duly appreciating the truths of natural science; and the teachers of religion on the one side are bound down by Church Articles and Liturgies, or on the other cannot conveniently outrun the traditionary creed of their congregations. Men of business have not much time for original thought concerning religion; and a great majority of the female sex have too little scientific knowledge or too little independence of judgment to deviate knowingly from current opinion. Necessarily therefore within the same Church, whatever the submission to common ordinances, there is a great mental gap between those who are most and those who are least influenced by the thought and knowledge of the age, especially in Astronomy, in Geology, in Geography, in Physiology, to say nothing of History and Literary Criticism. Minds which have by no means gone so far as to throw off belief of an established religion, or the cardinal and prominent tenets of a creed, nevertheless to a great extent *interpret* things differently, so as practically to come to a different result from the older beliefs.

Now in this matter of Prayer, it is obvious what was the primitive doctrine of most nations, and in particular both of the Hebrews and of the early Christians. That God ruled the universe *by law*, none had any idea. They supposed that His rule might be compared to that of an earthly king, who said to one servant *Go*, to another *Come*, to a third *Do this*, and was obeyed. Indeed the Hebrews, like the Persians and Arabs, supposed ministering spirits to guide the actions of the elements and of the heavenly bodies ; also, to guard or watch human individuals. Instinct, under a sense of weakness or desire, often impelled them, as it impels us, to pray for this or for that ; and they could but very vaguely define to themselves the limits within which prayer was right, and beyond which it would be rather impious than pious. We should all be much astonished to hear of barbarians so stupid as to pray that the new moon should give as much light as the full moon, or that a winter's day should be luminous and long as a day of summer. In the very infancy of man the steadiness of sun and moon were so fully recognized, that it would have seemed idiotic to pray for any irregularity. But there has always been an enormous margin of events concerning which man saw no revelation of a fixed divine purpose, and therefore could not chide prayer as a presumptuous desire to turn the divine decrees aside. Indeed under polytheistic belief, the gods are morally imperfect ; and no greater impropriety was felt in coaxing a god (a genius, a fairy) than in coaxing a mortal man. A vow,—in which a promise was made *contingent* upon the god hearing a prayer,—was thought a pious procedure ; yet it is nothing but an attempt to *bargain* with the god. Such bargains in antiquity were solemnly sanctioned by many States, as by the Romans, and public money was often voted in fulfilment. In the Hebrew Book of "Judges" the atrocious vow of Jephthah is not blamed. Jacob in Genesis makes a distinctly contingent vow. To vow to a god the tithe of an enemy's spoil on condition of victory, seemed wholly unblameable and decidedly pious to most ancient nations.

It may be doubted whether in any Christian sect of England or the United States prayers of this character could be endured. A vow, as understood by Christians, has nothing conditional in it. If it be an arbitrary, yet it is an absolute, promise to the Most High; it is not a bargain, as with the Romans. Of necessity those among us who believe the tides, the meteors, the clouds, the winds, to be guided by laws as fixed as gravitation, are hereby disabled from praying about them or against them, equally as about an eclipse. Nevertheless, whatever weaknesses—the fruit of ancient ignorance—are incorporated with the Christian Scriptures, are accepted and even treasured up by simple hearted and pious persons, whose intellect either is not duly informed or has not duly acted on their creeds; and the deplorable dogma of Infallibility has made it very difficult for the pious to go directly against the sacred book, however grave and obvious the error. But within the compass of that book itself there is a variety of doctrine, a higher as well as a baser view; and to the higher view the nobler and more thoughtful minds tend. If at one time encouragement is given to importunity in prayer, on the assumption that God is comparable to a man who grants a petition merely to get rid of a teazing beggar; yet elsewhere it is laid down that repetition in prayer is vain, and that God is not moved by much speaking. If in one place it is said, that when two or three shall *agree* to pray for a thing, be it what it may, it shall be granted to them; in other places there is limitation, and human ignorance of what it is wise to ask is pointed at. In fact, in every prayer for things outward, among persons not wholly fanatical, the proviso, "if it be according to Thy will," is now understood or expressed; and in matters of vehement personal desire, the clause is probably added: "nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done." Also, if any Christian teacher be asked, under what circumstances it is reasonable to have confidence that our prayer will be granted, he will hardly fail to reply, under the guidance of a familiar text, that it is only when we know that we ask a thing which is in accordance with the will of God.

Under such a complication,—which is the ordinary state of every Church,—it is (I must think) painful rudeness in an opponent, if indeed he is as well informed of the facts as a critic ought to be, to assume in the present generation of English Christians the lowest and meanest views of prayer which prevailed in less instructed and Pagan times. It exasperates too much to enlighten. It was a simple insult, nothing less, to propose that Christians should pray for the sick in one special ward of an infirmary, and then (as a test of the utility of prayer) should observe whether the patients recovered better in that ward than in the other wards. Did its proposer imagine that a Christian is *able* to pray for anything that others may dictate to him? One must be drawn keenly by desire from within or by painful distress, and must feel either assurance or strong hope that the petition conforms with the divine mind, before he can pray fervently. A philosopher (whatever his merits in his own line) sadly lowers himself when he so intrudes into sacred feelings and judgments which he does not understand. At the same time, there was and is abundant cause for grave remonstrance with the religion of the day in this very matter; and with a moderate turn, the same proposal might have given point unblameably to the argument.

It might have been set before English Christians, that they would certainly resent it as an insult, if any one were to propose, as a test of the utility of prayer, petition for a given topic (such as that concerning the hospital-ward)—without caring to ascertain first whether the thing asked could reasonably be esteemed in accordance with the divine will, or whether they themselves had any fervent desire for it. This being the case, how can the same enlightened Christians passively endure that the Privy Council should dictate to them what they are to ask of God for each member of the Royal Family? How can they approve of a stereotype prayer against public enemies, as if it were always *à priori* certain that in every war England is right and has God on her side? Knowing, as all the educated do, that rains and droughts and pestilences, follow laws of matter as fixedly as do the planets, how can they think it pious to supplicate the Most High to interfere with them? Such public prayers, written in an age of lower knowledge, and sustained by the routine of State, *train all the educated to hypocrisy*, and lower the standard of truthfulness. Evidently, to pray for the royal family is enforced as a test of loyalty; which is on a par with the command to show loyalty by worshipping Cæsar's image. The coarseness of (what is called) the National Anthem,—"God save the Queen,"—against the Queen's (imaginary) foes, is quite disgusting. There is plenty of matter here for just and profitable attack from those who never pray, if they would make the attack from the highest and noblest principles of Christians themselves; moreover, it is very reasonable to claim, that those who hold high dignity in Church or

State, and at the same time are distinguished by intellect and freedom of thought, will initiate public movement against these evil stereotyped prayers. Will they for ever preserve a dastardly silence, and leave reform to avowed opponents or to enemies who are strangers to the deep things of the Christian heart?

Cicero and Horace alike held, that men ought to pray to God for things external,—which man cannot control and God does control;—not for things internal, such as contentment, courage, or in a word, virtue; which a man ought to provide by his own effort. To despise any one for believing with Cicero, I find myself unable; the contumely which I read in many quarters is to me very unseemly and painful. Nevertheless, I regard it as quite certain that the progress of knowledge will ere long enforce the entire abandonment of stereotype prayer made beforehand for outward blessings or conveniences: however inevitable it be, that under pain, want or severe anxiety human nature will ejaculate to the All-ruler earnest desire, not unprofitably. "He who searcheth hearts" knows how to estimate such prayers aright, —cannot blame them,—and has his own way of answering them. But to plan beforehand how others may or shall pray for a King or Queen's "health, wealth, long life" and "victory," is quite a different matter from prayer that is extorted by inward instinct or agony. So too is the "agreeing together" beforehand what to pray for, as if (in the coarse words of a ranting preacher) "by a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull all-together" men could rival Kehama, and drag God along with them.

Undoubtedly the received belief of old was, that God's Providence ruled the world by agencies from without. A pious saint in danger from enemies was imagined to pray for (perhaps) "twelve legions of angels" as a military aid. A prophet's eyes were opened to see chariots and horses, invisible to other mortals, fighting on the side of his people. To such a mental condition the prayer of those days adjusted itself. But now all thoughtful persons educated in England are aware that the Divine rule is carried on by the laws of the material universe, and by the agencies of the human mind; and as it is no longer admissible to entreat that the Most High will tamper with his own laws, prayer tends to concentrate itself upon the human mind,—that is, invokes influence from the Divine Spirit on the mind either of him who prays or of some others.

Against this form of prayer, which may be called spiritual prayer, materialists rush with as rude and coarse attack as against prayer for things external. Their tone, and frequently their bold utterances, all but make an axiom of Atheism. Now I have no harsh feeling for Atheists, knowing as I do with what difficulties noble minds struggle, and how cruelly the follies and crimes of theological devotees have led astray and exasperated many intellects. But it suffices to accept and accost Atheists as our equals, whom we invite to courteous debate on fit occasion, and will always esteem and love, if they be morally worthy. Many of them seem to manifest nothing but scorn for Theism, and demand to lay down axioms of their own, which no wise Theist can ever accept. One of these axioms is, that "of course we can know nothing but phenomena." Since God assuredly is not a phenomenon, this assumes that "of course" we can know nothing of God. Another axiom is, that when we speak of one thing as the *cause* of another, all that we mean is, that the latter invariably follows the former; so they attempt to resolve causation into antecedence. I stoutly deny that that is all that *I mean* when *I say* "cause;" and if they reply that it is all that I *ought* to mean, I beg them to prove that, and not assume it without proof, as they do. The purport of their pretended axiom is to involve the whole universe, material, moral, and mental, in a rigid mechanical chain,—that is, in Fate: this granted, prayer of course is vain. Again, the idea of a Personal Deity they treat with contempt as "anthropomorphic," and assert that Personality implies limitation. Nay, but Person is only another word for Mind or Spirit. If we say Divine Spirit, they show equal enmity to the phrase. What avail the objections of such men to prayer? Their attack is not against prayer as such,—*i.e.*, entreaty made to a Divine Spirit, but against the existence or accessibility of any such Spirit. Spiritual prayer of course assumes that God is in the human mind,—that he is aware and (so to say) conscious of all our minds,—moreover, that he not only approves of, but is concerned to promote, human virtue. In the attacks which I read against spiritual prayer, it is visible that these axioms of Theism are denied: hence the attack is really that of Atheism against Theism,—which is all fair, if it be conducted by quiet reasonable argument, not by scornful assumptions, nor under a pretence that they are only attacking a practice of Theists.

As Cicero and Tacitus and Aristotle, and the wisest modern moralists, insist, there is no morality if there be no freedom of the will. If a man's action is in all details predetermined like a comet's path, he can no more be virtuous or vicious, praiseworthy or blameable, than the comet. Whatever may be said for a doctrine of universal Necessity by eccentric and confident reasoners, who think themselves pre-eminently philosophic, the great mass of mankind continue to believe as firmly as their own existence, that they have a choice between the better and the worse, and that they deserve *blame* for many of their bad actions; in short, that God, "while binding Nature fast in Fate, left free the human will." For myself, I must profess that my belief in my Free Will is coeval with and as firm as my belief in Matter; and I think it clear that the belief in *both* is the first principle of all knowledge, and of course is prior to a belief in God. The assailant of spiritual prayer is apt to assume that the actions of the human will are as much determined beforehand as the movements of material particles, and therefore such prayer is as vain as prayer for things outward. But he does not pretend any proof that the will is thus mechanically predetermined: indeed he knows that proof is impossible: but he says that we probably shall hereafter find that the case of mind is similar to that of meteorology, and that in the progress of knowledge it will be discovered that the mind has no freedom. This amounts to saying that the progress of knowledge will probably annul the first axioms on which all knowledge is built. I need only reply that it has not yet done so, and I utterly disbelieve that it ever will.

We see in the marvellous instincts of brute minds, and in human instinct too, the operation of a Higher Mind in the animated universe. *How* this action takes place we are necessarily ignorant, just as we are *how* we think at all. We can have no ultimate standing ground but in simple fact. Thought, life, existence, must remain for ever a mystery. So must the action of the Divine Spirit on the animal mind, which I see as a fact; and seeing it, I cannot doubt the action of the same Spirit in the higher regions of the human mind. Religion has long been described by pious persons as a "walking with God;" that is, as a permanent tendency of the mind, when relieved of other necessary thought, to remember the oversight, the insight, the joint consciousness of the Divine Spirit, who essentially and primarily loves goodness, justice,—in short, moral perfection. That virtue is a final object for which man and the whole of human life is ordained, is a main principle of Theism. To supplicate God inwardly for increase of virtue, or pour out gratitude for his tender mercies to ourselves, and admiration of his manifold infinitude, is therefore its natural instinct; and such instinct cannot have been given us for nothing. In fact, its moral influence on the heart which cultivates it is the richest of all rewards. Materialists and Atheists are generally very severe against those who needlessly mortify lower and animal instincts, and are often slow to discover when it is *not* needless: they have then certainly no right to claim that a pure and noble instinct shall be repressed rather than cultivated. The best informed among the opponents of all prayer will (with good reason) deprecate the epithet Atheist; but if the God whom alone they admit to be possible has none but a mechanical existence, and praying to him is no wiser than praying to the clouds, he is no more to us than the gods of Epicurus; we can have no personal relations with him any more than with dead men.

Let the strong and scornful opposition to Prayer, which has been so widely echoed, be directed on formal, public, cut-and-dried Prayer, lengthy musical Prayer, profane singing of sacred words for the sake of fine music, Litanies with endless repetition, the "Lord's Prayer" recited so often and so fast that it becomes unintelligible;—and much good may come of this outburst. There is scarcely a public prayer used in all Christendom which does not admit, perhaps urgently need, keen criticism. The "Lord's Prayer" is nowise to be excepted from this remark. Moreover, to pray without desire, is the more ignoble, the more it is done in combination and in system. What then of coaxing or scolding young people into it? What of paying choristers and public singers of addresses to God? There is abundant room for intelligent and profitable correction, without shocking any of the rightful sanctities of the heart.

INTUITION.

FROM "THE INDEX," TOLEDO, OHIO.

[1873.]

IN the last number of *The Index* which has reached my eye (June 7), there is an editorial summary of the contrasts to Free Religion; and among the contrasts is placed *Intuitionalism.* Since I account myself a Free Religionist, while I also profess to be an Intuitionalist, I beg to explain wherein I think the writer to misunderstand Intuition.

First, I would protest against accepting Theodore Parker as a trustworthy expounder of the doctrine. He was a man of high moral sensitiveness, commanding will, noble aspiration, wide and rapid in his survey of men and books, bold and warm, eminent in unselfishness and self-sacrifice; but far from accurate either in logic or in history. He made the wonderful assertion that mankind at large has *intuition of a Future State*, blind to the fact that this is false of the ancient Hebrews and of the modern Buddhists, to say nothing of our irreligious multitudes. Like Mazzini and the deist Lord Herbert of Cherbury, he regarded God and Immortality as alike truths of intuition; but I know few Theists who can herein follow him. The vast majority of men regard a Future State as precisely the *darkest* of all dogmas, —"The Great Enigma." One part glorifies Christianity because it reveals this *otherwise unattainable* doctrine; another part holds up "spirit rapping" to admiration for the same reason. The misapplication of a principle by one who exalts it, is no disproof of the principle.

I was an intuitionalist in Geometry before I became an intuitionalist in Morals and Religion. It is to me a clear first principle that no science can exist except on the basis of intuition; and as Geometry is the received type of the most perfect science, I hope it will not displease the readers of *The Index* if I enter a little into this, avoiding technicality as far as possible. The common treatises of Geometry, following Euclid, put forth in the outset certain *axioms*, or propositions to be received without proof; *i.e.*, to be received upon mere reading of them, or to be believed *upon looking at them*,—which, in Latin phrase, is, by INTUITION. Thus intuition confronts us on the threshold of the science. Of the current axioms, some are verbal and belong to all quantitative science; yet two, quite necessary, are purely geometrical: some persons would make three, but the following two suffice: 1. Between any two points in space *one* path exists shorter than *any other;* 2. Two straight lines in the same plane perpendicular to a third are everywhere mutually equi-distant. From the first we can prove the primary properties of a *plane;* from the second the primary properties of *parallel straight lines.* Many attempts have been made to get rid of these axioms, but the reasoner has had at last to propose some other axiom as a substitute. But if any should now succeed in this attempt, the fact would remain, that prior reasoners who rested on mere intuition, held as complete a conviction of truth as any of us, and a just conviction too.

Next, in the science of Mechanics we begin by laying down certain *laws* concerning equilibrium and motion, and concerning the transference of forces from one point of application to another. For all of these but one, mere intuition suffices to bring conviction; yet appeal may be made, and is made, to experiment, to furnish material for the proofs by argument called "induction." For the main law of Dynamics intuition does not suffice; yet neither does experiment, if we reason severely: for, the dogma that a ball once set in motion will move *for ever, with undiminished velocity,* if unimpeded, is not adequately established as absolute truth by the petty experiments which alone we can make,—such as, on a lawn and on a sheet of ice. Such experiments suffice for the *presumption* of truth. Call it a hypothesis rather than a law; then in the applications of the science abundant verification of the hypothesis is found. But (what must here be pressed) induction itself rests on a basis which is anything but demonstrative. Its basis is one or more provisional assumptions, to be received as were the axioms of Geometry, upon intuition. The late Professor Baden Powell, a very keen searcher into first principles, bases induction on two *presumptions*, and says that the first is justified by the second. 1. "All phenomena of the kind in question are *similar* to the few which are actually examined." 2. Nature is uniform in her laws and processes. Now in a book problem of Mechanics or of Heat, where we *by hypothesis* exclude diversity, we hardly need the first principle at all; but when we deal with actual Nature, and consider the vagueness of the word "similar," the second presumption by no means "justifies" the first—much less in Chemistry, in Physiology, and in human action, where elements are very numerous, and a complexity easily unsuspected by us is at work. But the second principle, on which Sir John Herschel insists that all modern science rests —the uniformity of Nature—is furnished to us originally by *intuition;* just as are the axioms in Geometry. No doubt we have much after-verification of the doctrine, in the harmony of each science with itself, and next of each with others; finally in the agreement of results indicated by science with results ascertained by direct inquiry and observation. Not the less is the original doctrine a presumption, a hypothesis, a provisional truth, dictated to us by good sense, by common sense, or, it may be, by uncommon sense, by genius, upon mere intuition. Nor is this all. The "uniformity" of Nature is a very vague phrase, needing different interpretations under different circumstances, and often yielding little more than a *suggestion* by Analogy. In the actual process of induction we cannot dispense with consideration of chances (as I have explained in the "Fragments of Logic" prefixed to my volume called *Miscellanies*). If we *know no reason* for supposing the cases not examined to differ from those examined, we *presume* similarity: and when we find partial verifications (in fact) of that which was anticipated (by argument), we need to inquire "whether this is too much to attribute to chance." This is decided only by good sense (common or uncommon), which is supreme arbiter; just as on propositions called intuitive. One might even say we decide by intuition whether an induction is sound. Yet, of course, this is an intuition of a mind well versed in special inquiry.

I hold that science is indissolubly wedded to intuition, and that we can never succeed in building Religion into a science if we cast off intuition. I advance nothing paradoxical, but that which we must expect. I do not regard intuition as a *faculty*, any more than is "good sense" a faculty. Barbarians eminently lack good sense, as is testified by their wild credulity. Wide information, habits of orderly, systematic thought, instrumental aids to accuracy (such as writing affords), public debate, open judicial processes,—all these combine to diffuse general good sense in a community; so that, as the mind of nations becomes cultivated, the sounder is the judgment and the more trustworthy the sentiment which rests on mere intuition. The basis of morals, however, is the agreement of barbarian with civilized man as to the *relative rank* of certain springs of action; such as, that gratitude is nobler than self-indulgence, patriotism than love of life, love of knowledge than love of dainty food, public spirit than private avarice. Only *the soul from within* pronounces a verdict upon such matters. If a man has a taste of his own in morals,—as, if he hold a sensual life to be better and more desirable than a life of philanthropy and self-sacrifice,—we cannot *argue* him down; we can only *vote* him down by appealing to the intuition of mankind.

The most fundamental proposition of religion known to me is the axiom (justified by intuition) that "the qualities of a created mind cannot be higher, but must be immeasurably lower, than that of its Creator;" or, "If there be a Mind ruling in the universe, it contains the noblest powers of the human mind, and vastly more." To impute pre-eminent intelligence and pre-eminent goodness to the primal source of our being, is the first step into Religion. It is not and cannot be demonstrated, otherwise than by appealing to the axiom which we lay down as intuitive. Of course, as axioms in science are very few, so are the intuitive truths of morals and religion. Geometers have fretted under the axioms, vainly; so likewise do utilitarian moralists and scientific religionists vainly fret against intuitive truths. Such first principles, though very few, are absolutely vital to the sciences.

As to making immortality an intuitive dogma, there are so many objections that it is wonderful (if anything were wonderful in religious opinion) how earnest theists can so treat it. But Coleridge wrote that the doctrine of the Trinity is the sole foundation of all reasonable philosophy; so with him the doctrine of the Trinity was intuitive! Let every man, for his own guidance, give as much weight as he pleases to his private thoughts,—to his conscientious convictions, his auguries of what is coming, his theological philosophy; but no one can propose *his* "intuitive truths" as a basis for the belief of others—that is, as a basis for science. He must show, either that mankind in enormous preponderance believes them, so that they are matters of *human* intuition, not merely personal; or else, that in some proportion to men's growth in intellect, wisdom, nobleness of moral character, they *tend* to believe them. If Theodore Parker had been satisfied to alledge this *tendency*, he would have a claim for immortality as a presumption ; still, as I think, by no means as a dogma which may be simply announced as truth. Immortality has always been with me (ever since I ceased to receive the doctrine on Scriptural authority) only the final result of a chain of argument which, however I might succeed in shortening it, had several loopholes of error ; nor have I ever entirely overcome an underlying suspicion that there may be *an inherent contradiction* (such as a German school maintains that there is) in the idea that the *same* individual who dies can revive. Hence, practically, I am here at a vast distance from Theodore Parker, who was able to preach the doctrine as a fact, and make it fundamental in religion. He was certainly wrong in asserting for it the rank of a truth intuitive to mankind.

But the question whether we can appeal to human intuition for a decision on this particular matter is one of detail. I desire only to bring out clearly the true doctrine of *intuitive truths*, or "propositions to which we assent by mere dwelling of the mind upon them."

PROTESTANTISM OLD AND NEW.

FROM "THE INDEX," TOLEDO, OHIO.

[1873.]

IN the great controversy which divided Europe between Catholic and Protestant, the clearest and most powerful minds on the Protestant side appealed to the Bible as the authoritative arbiter; and with excellent reason. The matter in debate was not whether Christianity was true and divine, nor whether the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were in harmony, nor whether the Scriptures were inspired and infallible; for on such topics all were agreed. The question was, "What is Christianity? What beliefs and practices are Christian?" The Romanist replied, "You must consult tradition, and of that tradition the Church (*i. e.* the clergy, the hierarchy) are the depositary and guardian." But the Protestant said, "Nay, but we must consult the Scriptures of the New Testament. You of Rome concede, you even maintain, that these are earlier than any other Christian documents: by studying them we learn what doctrines the apostles themselves taught; and if the pope and bishops claim to be successors of the apostles, they cannot or must not claim to set their doctrines aside and teach things new." The Romanist had no rejoinder, but that the laity were unable to interpret the Scriptures aright, and that no interpretation was sound, which was not sanctioned by the Church. To this Luther had his answer: "*Bonus grammaticus bonus theologus;*" which in such argument means: whoever understands Greek grammar well enough to make out what is written in the Greek Testament, may understand that book as well as any bishop. But to be more guarded against undervaluing the aid given by learning to the interpretation of ancient writings, it sufficed to say that the claim of an authoritative interpretation by the clergy was preposterous in itself; and much more when it rested on an alledged unwritten tradition, under the cover of which any superstitious and monstrous absurdity might creep in, and many had crept in, to the great damage of truth, piety, and morals. History shows how conscious the Church of Rome was that the New Testament was against her; for, so far as she was able and dared, she kept the book out of the hands of the laity. Down to the most recent years, no English traveller within the pope's dominions was allowed to carry in his portmanteau more than one copy of the New Testament in the Italian language; any second copy was taken away by the search-officers, on the presumption that it was intended for the reading of Italians. While suppression was the policy of Rome, publicity and multiplication of copies was the obvious policy of the Reformers; and no one who is not willing to run behind the pretence of occult divine powers communicated to Church-officers by the carnal imposition of hands, can hesitate to justify the appeal of Protestants to the oldest and acknowledged documents of Christianity. When the question was, *Which* shall we accept as the authoritative standard of apostolic teaching,—the writings of the apostles and of their personal coadjutors, or the later assertions of Church-officers? common sense lay on the side of the Protestant reply: We take the New Testament writings as our arbiter.

A minor difficulty indeed arose, when the Protestants so far tampered with the received canon of Scripture, as to exclude from it certain later Jewish writings, because, no Hebrew original being extant, apparently the Greek which we have is their original. This suggested to a Romanist the sarcasm: "So then! you decide by your own private judgment what shall be accepted as Sacred Scripture, and then claim to appeal to it against us!" This would have been a just and formidable remark, if Protestants had *added* to the received canon; but as they only *took away*, and what they took away was Jewish, not Christian, and no cardinal point of the controversy was thereby affected, the sole result of such a reply was to suggest a far deeper question, disagreeable to both the combatants—how *either* of them knew that the canon of Scripture (so called) was authentic, primitive, or composed by persons deserving trust so absolute. But the more cautious and thoughtful Protestants, in their appeal to Holy Scripture, were less anxious to impose belief than to claim freedom: hence the negative side only was dwelt on in the sixth of the thirty-nine Anglican articles; namely, "nothing that cannot be clearly proved from Holy Writ," ought to be accounted as necessary of belief.

It is not wonderful that those Christians who have no idea of a controversy with any but fellow Christians, have become accustomed to regard "the Bible" as the final court of appeal and actual arbiter of truth. I will here take occasion to advert to a doctrine of probability, in direct opposition to Herbert Spencer; a man for whom in external science I have a profound admiration, but with whom I find myself in perpetual and hopeless collision, as soon as he gets into metaphysics, mathematical philosophy, or history. He says that when two opposite beliefs are in long conflict, "there is usually something between them in common, —something *taken for granted* by each; and *this something*, if not to be set down as an unquestionable verity, may yet be considered to have *the highest degree of probability*." [Herbert Spencer, *First Principles* Part I., chap. i., § ii., p. 10.] On the contrary, when honest and able men, within the same circle of thought and literature, continue in fixed schism of opinion, the facts suggest that neither side has the consistency and energy of truth, or it would manifestly win upon its opponent; the great probability therefore is that *they hold some false principle in common*, which dooms both of them to internal contradictions. Hence, what they alike "take for granted," and regard as axiomatic, needs, above all other things, to be suspected and severely searched into, as the probable *nidus* of error damaging them both. Such is the assumption of certainty and perfection in what the Christian churches call Holy Scripture.

The three centuries and a half which have passed since Luther, have made enormous additions to European knowledge, alike in breadth and accuracy. However vast the erudition of a few scholars, who devoured indiscriminately all remaining scraps of Latin literature before any European modern literature could compete with the ancient; however keen the zest with which the newly opened mine of Greek literature was explored,—yet even the most learned then read with puerile credulity, or, if they attempted criticism, criticized childishly. The discrimination of fable from truth, in what passed as history, scarcely began before the end of the seventeenth century. Our Milton believed in "*Brut*us the Trojan" as the founder of *Brit*ain. Sound criticism of the classical writers of history attained no great perfection until the eighteenth century, and has been carried further in this nineteenth century, especially by the German Universities. The criticism directed to the detection of spurious books, or to decide on the age of literary documents, was quite in its infancy in Luther's time, but was soon discerned to be of immense importance. After attaining consciousness of power by much exercise on the literature entitled "profane," it gradually addressed itself to the books of Hebrew and Christian Scripture, with results which make the intellectual position of the modern Evangelical widely different from that of the Puritan two centuries ago.

The appeal to the New Testament is of course still open, in controversy with the Romanist; but the Romanist has ceased to be the principal or most dreaded adversary. He can no longer wield the iron arm of the State against those who reject the papal creed. France, Spain, Italy, Austria, Poland, Mexico, Brazil, all disown the office of persecuting for the Church; and while Catholicism is weak in the hearts of the cultivated laity of nominally Catholic countries, we see the clear marks of *decaying power*, however many isolated converts it makes from those Protestant churches which have retained some of its characteristic doctrines. The modern English Evangelical has to encounter objections and difficulties which the Puritan never met. The adversaries of the old Puritan admitted and maintained the genuineness and authority of the received canon; but the very first objection which meets the modern Puritan is, "Why am I to believe what you call Holy Writ, when it teaches something opposed to reason and good sense? What do I know of the writers?"—and, in fact, the intense study of the books by professors of Divinity *is precisely that which has fundamentally sapped their authority.*

The modern Evangelical creed has tried to discard all the niceties of the Trinitarian controversy, and in so doing has generally run upon something which of old was denounced as "heresy,"—whether by holding three or two Gods, as do the vulgar; or by teaching that the divinity of Jesus consisted in an indwelling of the one God in the body of a mere man. To two Gods they have in general no objection, provided they be not *called* two Gods; call them "two Persons in the Godhead" and all is right. But the emphasis of the creed is placed on the "atonement by blood." When the devotee of "the blood" is asked from what Scripture he learns his doctrine, he naturally cites the Epistle to the Hebrews as his decisive authority; but encounters (perhaps with dismay) the objection that it is anonymous, and certainly is not the composition of Paul, as the English version dishonestly asserts. He thus finds he can no longer insist that the New Testament shall be taken as a whole, but that the task rests on him to prove, *book by book* separately, that each is "inspired,"—which is understood to mean infallible. To the ignorant some teachers will daringly or ignorantly cite as proof: "All Scripture is written by inspiration of God,"—words addressed by Paul to Timothy concerning the *Hebrew* Scriptures, before the Christian books existed or were collected; moreover there is fraud in the translation, which has foisted on us the sacred English word *Scripture*. Paul certainly never meant to say that "Every *writing* is divinely inspired," which this punctuation of the text makes him say; for scripture and writing are the same word in Greek. But, after all, why are we to trust to Paul's authority, when so many apostolic Christians were in violent controversy with him? Paul himself minutely informs us of his intense opposition to the Church of Jerusalem; which, as the earliest, and as presided over by the immediate disciples of Jesus, was more likely to hold the true doctrine of Jesus than Paul. He entitles brethren who belonged to the school of Jerusalem-Christians, *certain false brethren*, who had *bewitched* his converts by teaching them a different gospel; and bids them count every one accursed who taught any other gospel than his. That these brethren were received as equals and coadjutors by the Apostle James and the other actual disciples of Jesus went for nothing with him. Indeed, how little Paul cared for the apostles, he was most anxious that his Galatian converts should know. He minutely tells what a bitter public rebuke he had given to Peter; and concerning "those who seemed to be somewhat," that is, the three great apostles at Jerusalem "who seemed to be pillars," he declares that "whatsoever they were, *it was no matter to him*." Every chief epistle of Paul shows, more or less distinctly, the sharp controversy between him and the Church of Jerusalem, who are now contemptuously called "the Judaizers;" though they were the original Christian body and form the only historical connection with Jesus himself. That they were fundamentally opposed *as to the doctrine of the Atonement*, is more than indicated by Paul, when he gives such prominence to "glorying in the cross;" implying that his opponents from Jerusalem did not glory in the cross: nay, he actually says they preached circumcision to the Gentiles in hope of avoiding persecution for the cross. From the Epistle of James himself the "peculiar doctrines" of Pauline Christianity are wholly absent. That apostle makes true religion to consist in right acting, not in a right creed. The creed of the "devils,"—belief in God's Unity,—satisfies him without a Trinity; only as in the creed of Islâm it is added, "and Mohammed is God's prophet,"—so in the creed of James it was contained, "and Jesus is the Lord." Faith, which Paul makes primary, with James is secondary, he sets "works" ahead of faith, and entitles those "vain men," who (with Paul) preached justification by faith. The Apocalypse also makes Jesus vehemently denounce those who (as Paul) approved of (sometimes) eating meat that had been sacrificed to idols; and the phrase, "those who say that they are apostles and are not," is (under all the circumstances) most reasonably interpreted as pointing at Paul. James moreover earnestly implores Christian teachers not to curse one another; on which we have a comment in Paul's curse on those who teach another gospel than his, and in his declaration that he wishes those (teachers from Jerusalem) who trouble the Galatians "were even cut off;" which suggests that if he could have struck them dead by miracle, or "delivered them to Satan," he would have done it. Thus, while we admit that at least the principal epistles called Paul's are genuine, and that, with the Epistle of James, they are the very earliest and truly valuable historical documents concerning the primitive Christianity, yet when the modern Evangelical appeals to "the New Testament," we have to ask: "To *which school* of early Christianity do you refer us for the truth? Do you dare to reject the authority of the Jerusalem church, as represented by James? Why expect of us more deference to Paul than that church showed him?"

Another grave matter arises, in regard to the Fourth Gospel. On it, side by side with Paul and the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Evangelical creed is founded. Not that epistle only fails us, and Paul himself, but the Fourth Gospel can no longer be rested on as authentic, or as of the first century. It is not quoted by name earlier than the latter part of the second century: *perhaps* it is quoted by Justin Martyr in the middle of that century, but he does not impute the book (whatever it is that he quotes) to the Apostle John; and modern criticism seems to have established that the Fourth Gospel represents the advanced opinions of the movement party in the second century, and has no right to be regarded as authentic or historical. [This whole question is very fully discussed in Thomas Scott's *English Life of Jesus*.] Next, since neither Paul nor James alludes to miracles wrought by Jesus, even the first three gospels must probably have incorporated later fabulous accounts; and that they are not contemporary records, there is overwhelming evidence. Clearly, the appeal to the New Testament as decisive of the mind of Jesus is not at all an easy and certain procedure. Moreover, the question arises, Why did

Jesus leave us to guess and puzzle out what doctrine he came to teach? Could he have failed to give us authentic documents, had he foreseen at all the fatal mischiefs to follow from the neglect?

Upon all this heap of contrariety, improbability and uncertainty, follow direct attacks made by modern science. Evangelicism cannot cut itself adrift from the Old Testament. It wants the doctrine of the "Fall" from Genesis; it wants the promises to Abraham; it wants the kingship of David's family; it wants the Messianic prophecies; it insists on the quotations of the Old Testament Scriptures in the New, as testimony from Jesus himself and from the apostles to the inspired infallibility of the Old. The Bible (Old and New collectively) is the Protestant's Sacred Book. Yet there is no modern science which does not find gross error in it. Geology condemns its tale of creation and the universal deluge. Natural history laughs to scorn the feeding of all the animals for a whole year in an ark, and that by eight persons. The actual distribution of animals on the earth proves that they never proceeded from a single centre in Armenia. Chronology confutes the notes of time in the book of Genesis. Professors of languages cannot believe that men talked one language about four thousand years ago. Geography ridicules the four rivers of Eden. Physiology is aghast at the absurdity of demoniacal possessions,—a foolish mistake of the phenomena of epilepsy, mania, catalepsy, and other diseases; to omit many other topics. Astronomy cannot admit that there is a "firmament" in heaven and waters above the firmament; that evening and morning existed earlier than the sun; that the sun stood still at the command of Joshua, or went back according to the word of Isaiah. History confutes as false many of the prophecies, and not least that of the coming of the Son of Man in heaven before the generation had passed whom Jesus addressed; historical fact shows that all the first Christians were under delusion as to this cardinal original gospel, which announced: "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand; the Son of Man is at the door." History further traces that the doctrine of demons, the Devil, and Hell as a place of fiery torment, was learned by the Jews after the Babylonish captivity, from the "pagans" among whom they were mixed, during the era in which, by Jewish and Christian confession, prophecy was mute. These "pagan" monstrosities were sucked in with the mother's milk by Jesus and his disciples, and are now passed off upon us as of Christian and divine origin. Historical criticism detects numberless incongruities, credulity, and even unveracity, in the historical books (so called) of the New Testament, and shows that the law attributed to Moses was unknown in Jerusalem before the days of Josiah. More formidable still, moral science reveals enormous error in the morality of both Hebrew and Christian books; although they are undoubtedly far superior to the contemporary national religions, which is the true cause why they superseded them. Eminently condemned by morality are those cardinal Evangelical doctrines—atonement by "blood," arbitrary favoritism, and the eternal hell. The doctrine of atonement, as noticed above, rests mainly on the Epistle to the Hebrews, which tries to base it on the Jewish law. Yet in that law there is *no* atonement for moral sins,—such as theft, violence, adultery,—but only for ceremonial neglects. The great day of atonement was for the *errors* of the people; *i. e.*, for *ignorant omissions* of ceremonial duty (*agnoēmata* they are accurately styled in the Greek, Heb. ix. 7); so that the Jewish law is not to the purpose of the argument. Substitution of an innocent victim for a moral offender is an immorality not countenanced by the law of the Hebrews. Last, but not least, philosophy,—that is to say, cultivated thought,—finds it impossible to regard miracles, if miracles existed, as any fit proof of moral doctrine. Miracles, if wrought by a superior power, might be divine or might be devilish: man, as a moral being, would have to judge of their communications, and never could rightly reverse or alter his moral beliefs at their bidding. An authoritative dictation of moral truth through the medium of physical miracle is therefore an idea perniciously absurd. It is not necessary to press the vast attestation of experience, that all pretence to miraculous intervention is delusive.

Surely it is high time for those who value certain spiritual influences of Evangelicism, to base the creed on some safer foundation than "the Bible." In so far as that school holds something true and noble, its real foundation is *the inner nature of man*. Let them appeal to that nature boldly, and they will save all that is precious. By continuing to rest on an authoritative Bible, which is nothing but a congeries of small books, differing widely in age, character, language, authenticity, historical truth, good sense, and moral worth, they do but expose the precious gold of their creed to be burned up with its hay and stubble.

ANCIENT SACRIFICE.

[1874.]

TO our modern intellects all killing of brute or man, for the pleasure of the Most High, seems so absurd, that perhaps we wonder how such a notion arose. Nor is the topic very simple. To compose the idea of Sacrifice, or Sacred Act, or Act of Faith (*Auto da Fe*), streams have flowed together from many sources.

A first primitive notion is this: that if for human food we take the life of some tame animal, which is in our power and under our protection, it befits to ask permission from the Author of Life. HE gave that precious gift alike to sheep and oxen, as to man; therefore we must not slay lightly and causelessly, but only when we can ask his blessing on the deed. In the case of wild animals, the hurry and tumult of hunting did not permit formalities of slaughter. All that could be done beforehand, was to offer some preliminary prayer, that should sanctify the hunting.

But from the primary recognition of God as Lord and centre of life, other things followed. In some nations, the blood, as seat of life, was accounted sacred. It then might not be used for food, but was poured out religiously. Mystery being thus added to the blood, a wild and base fancy was liable to arise, that God, or some god, had pleasure in the blood. Again, the man who had skill in slaughtering easily added the religious character to his art, and nothing was more natural than to remunerate his services of butchery and prayer by a portion of the slain beast. Hereby the original Popa (or *cook?*) became identified with the Sacerdos; and expected to feed his household by perquisites from the altar. Thus slaughter became a sacred act, performed by a priest when possible. It next became the interest of priesthood to urge sacrifice as a religious duty, that is, the sacrifice of *such* animals as were approved for human food. Moreover, vulgar fantasy conspired to give currency to the belief, that the god himself partook in the sacrifice, especially by its smell. On this the Greek poets are often explicit, and in Genesis we read, "Jehovah smelled a sweet savour," as denoting his acceptance of Noah's sacrifice (viii. 21.)

Human sacrifice undoubtedly had one of its sources in the fantastic picture of a future world, where the departed soul would need various human aids. In the grave of a chieftain were buried not only his armour and his weapons of war, but perhaps his war-horse too, slain to accompany him in the other world. This we know to have been a modern practice among North American Indians. But a great Scythian or Tartar emperor required nobler victims. In the world of spirits he must have, not a single war-horse, but a body-guard of mounted youths: these must be slain for his service; nay, according to Herodotus, to accompany a king of the Scythians (the *Scolotai* in Southern Russia) they ordinarily strangled one of his concubines, his cup-bearer, his cook, his groom, his page, his errand-bearer (or adjutant ?), and a stud of horses. We cannot doubt that the same fundamental ideas suggested the slaughters in Dahomey, on the death of a king. Cruel as we must deem these acts, they were not malignant, and did not imply peculiar atrocity in the agents. No life was regarded as of any value, if the convenience of the king required its sacrifice. As, at his command, a dutiful subject rushed into certain death against a formidable enemy, so to accompany a king in the other world was an ordinary duty of loyalty: nor had any one a conscience against killing innocent brethren for this purpose. Perhaps, if we could know it, the slain were considered blessed, and even thought themselves so. Those killed religiously in Thibet by the arrows of the boy called *Buth*, were accounted holy and peculiarly fortunate, according to the testimony of the Jesuit missionaries of 1661. Not very unlike is the moral complexion of a practice among the ancient Getæ, or Goths of the Danube. A belief in immortality did but make human life cheaper to them. Every fifth year they sent a messenger to their deity, Zalmolxis, to inform him of their needs, and the mode of dispatch was as follows:—He was tossed into the air, and received on the points of three spears. If he died forthwith, the god was accounted propitious; but if the victim or messenger continued alive, he was reviled as wicked, and another was sent in his place. These accounts show how easily, among men accustomed to slaughter in battle, poetical fantasy may lead straight to human sacrifice.

The phenomena known to us concerning the Greeks are rather peculiar. In their historical era, they utterly repudiated human sacrifice, yet they unanimously supposed it to have been practised by their ancestral heroes on various occasions; and their poets abound in moralizings about Agamemnon slaying his daughter—the most signal case, but not at all solitary. Yet the earliest poets show total unacquaintance with such tales, which (with abundance of other sensational horrors) are mere after-invention, suggested probably by the practices of other nations. Some of their neighbours had wild fantasies of their own, as in the drowning of horses to a river god. One may conjecture that, as in the passage of an army both horses and men were apt to be drowned, it was imagined that by a voluntary sacrifice of a *few* horses to the *honour* of the god, his jealousy would be satisfied, and a favourable passage secured.

This opens a new topic. Greeks and Hebrews alike attributed to Superior Powers a certain jealousy of anything pre-eminent in man or in terrestrial things. Thus Polycrates, according to Herodotus, being too prosperous, attempted (but in vain) to propitiate divine jealousy by voluntary sacrifices. But among the Greeks, this never reached to the point of human victims.

The solemn religious sacrifice of select prisoners of war was apparently normal to the Mexican races, and may have been practised by some nations of the Old World. It is imputed to the Carthaginians; but many circumstances lessen the credit of the charge. Nevertheless, it is easy to see, how in the interests of humanity any priest or general might devise the scheme of a formal sacrifice, in order to stop indiscriminate massacre of prisoners. Perhaps not enough is known of the facts, to justify any definite theory. That human sacrifice occasionally arose out of *vows*, is more certain. The vow of a sacred spring (*ver sacrum*), as recorded in Livy (xxii. 10), was limited to the births among pigs, sheep, goats, and oxen, all of which were ceded to the god under certain conditions: but it is too evident in Leviticus xxvii. 28, 29, that the Hebrew vow might legitimately include human children or slaves; in which case the law (as we now read it) expressly forbids the redemption of a human being, but commands that he be put to death, if he have been devoted to Jehovah. The only practical illustration of this which we find in the history is the case of Jephthah's daughter; which suffices to show that this was really the currently received law of early Israel, however rare in practice so extreme and rash a vow. But (what is here to be observed) not the remotest idea appears, in any of the cases of sacrifices hitherto adduced, of its being an expiation or atonement for sin. No doubt, whatever happened, was readily interpreted as entailing some "gift to the altar," which was generally a gift to the priest's table. Thus the birth of a child in a Hebrew family required the offering of a lamb, or at least two young pigeons; not as atoning for any moral sin, but (according to the notion of the early Hebrews) as removing ceremonial uncleanness. The offering is in itself analogous to a baptismal fee paid by a Christian parent to the clergyman. So among the Greeks there was sacrifice preliminary to marriage—*προτέλεια.*

The same remark applies to the other Hebrew sacrifices, which are spoken of as expiatory. They never are supposed to remove moral sin, crime, or its punishment. A thief was ordered to restore the double; but his offence having nothing of ceremonial pollution, no ceremonial expiation was imagined. Nor was it dissimilar among the Romans. If any thing *ill-omened* occurred, such as a monstrous birth, or a shower of stones, or a cow walking upstairs, or a Vestal virgin being unchaste, the consul might be ordered to "allay the omens" by a propitiatory sacrifice; but only external mischief or ceremonial indecorum was contemplated as thus removable. The great day of Atonement among the Hebrews was expiatory of accidental ceremonial neglects alone (*ἀγνοήματα*, Heb. ix. 7). I believe that there is no standing ground at all for an argument which should impute to Hebrews, Greeks, or Romans—the ancient nations best known to us—that any slaying of victims could atone for conscious wilful sin or crime. Whenever misfortune came, they were liable to be tormented by the fear that they had unawares neglected some honour to a god or goddess, some ceremonial duty; as Oineus father of Meleager did homage to other gods, but forgot Artemis: and wherever there was a complex ceremonial law, such forgetfulness might always be suspected. Hence there was no end of such propitiations; but in Greece and Rome they died out with superstitious fears. Temples received endowments, and priests became too respectable to propagate any self-invented follies for the sake of increasing the sacrifices. Besides, contributions to the *treasury* of temples had also become an established form of piety.

One other ground of sacrifice has to be named—that which accompanied the making of a COVENANT. The sacrifice was supposed to add force and security to the promise or oath. How this should be, is perhaps most clearly explained by the ancient Roman practice recorded by Polybius (iii. 35), of swearing "*per Jovem Lapidem*," as the vulgar called it. He who was to swear, took a stone in his hand, and said: "If I intend or practise anything against this engagement, I pray that while all other men remain safe in their own countries, under their own laws, with their own modes of life, their temples and their sepulcres, I alone may be tossed out, as this stone is now." With these words he flings the stone out of his hand. In the third book of the Iliad, when a treaty is to be made, a sacrifice and libation of wine is essential. Agamemnon slays the lambs, and the chieftains pour wine on the earth. The people around pray,—"Whoever shall first transgress the treaty, as this wine is spilt on the ground, so may his brains be spilt!" We can hardly doubt that the same was the meaning of the sacrifice: "As these murdered lambs fall helpless, so may he who breaks the treaty be murdered." In the Hebrew Pentateuch, Moses is represented (Exod. xxiv. 8) as sprinkling the people with "the blood of the covenant." But it can hardly be too often repeated, that neither here or in the sprinkling of the door-posts with blood of the Paschal Lamb, does the remotest idea shew itself of atonement for sin.

The modern Jews, I believe, unanimously uphold that interpretation of their law, which alone is suggested by intelligent criticism: moreover, the learned and eloquent writer of the Christian "Epistle to the Hebrews" appears fully to admit all that is said above. He is indeed guilty of one great confusion, occasioned by the ambiguous sense of the Greek word διαθήκη, which, primarily meaning *a disposition* of affairs, is used either for any special arrangement, *i.e.*, covenant, or for a man's Last Will and Testament, which is to take effect after his death. It is undeniable that in Heb. ix. 16, 17, 20, the writer has argued illogically by confounding Covenant and Testament—and has bequeathed to Christendom the absurd phrases, Old and New *Testament*. But he is consistent in his declaration that the legal ceremonies, whether gifts or sacrifices, did not touch "the conscience" (ix. 9) of the worshipper, and could only "purify the flesh" (ix. 13); and that it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins (x. 4, 11); nor does it anywhere appear that he mistook the slaughter of the Paschal Lamb for a sin-atonement, as perhaps we must admit that Paul does, on comparing 1 Cor. x. 16, 18, with 1 Cor. v. 7. It is therefore the more astonishing that the writer to the Hebrews or any of his Christian contemporaries learned in the Hebrew law could have dreamed of finding there a weight of analogy for the wild idea, that the violent death of a righteous being by the hands of wicked men can be construed as a sacrifice pleasing to God, which purifies the conscience of believers. Had he argued as follows: "If the blood of bulls, offered by a priest in the performance of his duty, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, HOW MUCH MORE shall *the blood of a holy prophet, wickedly shed,* purify your consciences from a sense of sin," his words would not have been plausible. The argument is visibly monstrous. But by throwing into the back ground his own belief that the murder of Jesus was an odious crime, and alike in his own, as in every Christian estimate, horrible to God, and converting it into a *voluntary* offering of *himself*, he seeks to glorify the event. "Christ (says he) *through the Eternal Spirit* offered himself *without spot* to God" (ix. 14): and again, 25, 26, "Nor yet that he should offer himself often, ... but once, ... to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." It is notable how such a writer becomes a victim to other men's blunders, error attracting error. Thus he quotes from the Greek Septuagint, "a body hast thou prepared me," as the translation of Psalm xl. 6 of our Version, which, on the contrary, agrees with the Hebrew, "mine ears hast thou pierced." Out of this spurious word "body" (x. 5, 13) he actually makes an argument which reverses the obvious sense of the Psalm. The Psalmist insists, "God does not want *sacrifice*, but scorns it: he wants *obedience:*" but this writer makes out that the Psalmist means, "God does not want the sacrifice *of bulls and goats*, but the sacrifice *of a spotless prophet.*" The Psalm says nothing about bulls and goats, but about sacrifice and sin-offering absolutely. Now let us concede that we have a right to forget the part which wicked men took in the death of Jesus, and to treat it as his own voluntary act; imagine for a moment that it had been strictly so—(which ought to make this argument *better*, as well as clearer)—and what will be the position of things? Jesus will be made out to have *slain himself* "for the sins of many," in order to "sanctify" his disciples, and "purify them from an evil conscience" by his "one sacrifice for sins" (Heb. x. 12, 14, 22). Would not every Christian shudder at having such a historical fact put before him, as a mode of salvation? One is apt to seem slanderous and blasphemous, in naming the possibility as a hypothesis; yet I repeat, it ought to make the argument of the writer to the Hebrews *a fortiori* valid, if there is any validity in what he has written. It does appear most marvellous, that in protesting against the Hebrew ceremonies as carnal and weak, because they dealt only with impurities of the flesh, the Christian teachers should have (for the first time perhaps in the world's history) propounded so very carnal and revolting an idea, as that the blood of a holy prophet (whether shed violently or voluntarily) can justly remove from our consciences a sense of sin and sanctify us to God. We need not press the extreme weakness of mind which could dwell upon his "suffering without the gate" (Heb. xiii. 12). Nothing but artificial inculcation of this doctrine ("the blood of Jesus") can sustain it among us. Every intelligent English child is shocked when he first hears of "hoping pardon through his blood," and wonders how "blood" is concerned in the matter. The doctrine, in fact, is lower by far in carnality than anything in the Jewish ceremonial; lower, perhaps, than anything that we have a right to impute to Greeks or Romans. *Animal* sacrifice is discarded, to establish a *Human* sacrifice as cardinal to divine religion! It is a sufficiently mean idea, that the gods love the steam and smell of animal slaughter; but it is still more shocking to imagine that the bloodshed of a holy person is in any sense "a sacrifice for sin," "a propitiation" (or mercy seat? Rom. iii. 25), "an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour" (Eph. v. 1), and that by a belief in it, or by a trust and reliance upon it, we become delivered from an evil conscience, that is, from a sense of God's displeasure for our sins. Are we really to believe, that the Most High was pleased by the crucifixion of Jesus? If it be said, "No, he reprobated the deed, but he was pleased that Jesus so meekly submitted to an inevitable fate," this is mere evasion; for, all comparison of it to a legitimate sacrifice then vanishes. If not death, but mere torture had been inflicted, the "meek submission" remains as praiseworthy as before; but, except as an example of conduct, nothing here (be it death, or be it torture,) has any relation to our consciences, or has the least tendency to deliver us from a sense of guilt, if the remembrance of past sins trouble us.

Unitarian Christians are in general unwilling to admit that the "atoning blood of Christ" is taught in the New Testament. It is not taught exactly as Archbishop Anselm is said first to have defined it, as "*compensation*" paid to God for remitting the punishment of man; but that Paul, John the apostle in the Revelation, the writer to the Hebrews, and the First Epistle of Peter, inculcate *purification* by the sacrifice of Christ, it seems useless to deny. That the Epistle of James is wholly silent on this and other matters, is true: and I think, it instructively shows, how rapidly James was isolated in holding fast to the original doctrine of the Jerusalem Church. When that Church perished corporately with Jerusalem in the war of Titus, no authoritative protest remained among Jewish Christians against the notions which prevailed with the Gentile churches.

It is a remarkable fact, that in the modern Evangelical Creed this most untenable and most unspiritual doctrine of Human Sacrifice is made *paramount.* The Divinity of Christ is chiefly valued, because without it "the Atonement" cannot be sustained. But nothing can sustain "the Atonement." It must be thrown over, equally with Eternal Punishment and Vicarious Sin, to make Christian doctrines even plausible to deliberate and impartial thought.

THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

[1875.]

"Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and the heart of those that are contrite."—ISAIAH lvii. 15.

TO undervalue knowledge and learning never can be wise; nor do we undervalue them in saying that moral qualities and strong common sense are of more avail for religious wisdom than any special or scholastic attainments. How indeed could religion be an affair for all men on any other condition? Nevertheless, as the mind of nations has grown, so has the grandeur of their ideas concerning God. The eye of man takes in at a glance the vast interval from this earth to a brilliant star; hence it is easy for a savage to conceive of God as sitting in the heavens, and yet seeing and watching the deeds of mankind. The early Hebrews had not reached the idea that God is present here, and everywhere on earth, as much as in heaven. They certainly supposed him to have a peculiar dwelling-place in the sky. But the master of a house, who sits in the principal chair and can give orders to all who sit or stand in the same room, may be said to be present in every part of that room, in which nothing escapes his eye or his authority. In the same manner, ancient men represented to themselves the universal presence of God, without resigning the imagination that he has a local throne and is surrounded by a special circle of ministering spirits. The moral effect of such belief is nearly the same as that which we now regard as more correct. If the Supreme Spirit knows everything that goes on everywhere—if, also, his power (or, as the ancients called it, his hand) reaches to every spot, the result to us is just that of his universal presence.

All ancient peoples imagined the Heaven in which God dwelt to be *aloft*, over our heads. Locally, as well as morally, he was to them the High and Lofty One. The grosser idea that he had some definite shape was at an earlier period effaced among the Hebrews by the belief that he was ever shrouded in a luminous cloud. To this the Apostle Paul alludes, when he entitles God "the Blessed and Only Potentate, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see." This is a splendid advance on the mean ideas of God set forth in Genesis and Exodus, and in every moral aspect is as noble and pure a representation as any that we can now attain. Yet a modification has been made inevitable by the discoveries of modern science. We know, beyond contradiction, that we are living on the surface of a globe; that, when a ship sails from England to the South direct, the stars overhead change, week by week; the mid-day sun rises higher and higher, being at first to the south, but at length right overhead, and afterwards is left to the north; also, that if the voyage be continued to Australia and New Zealand, the opposite side of our globe is at length reached. The stars which are above *our* head are beneath *their* feet. If Tartarus, or the region of the Dead, were, as the ancients supposed, immeasurably deep, then our *Tartarus* would be to the dwellers in New Zealand *Heaven*, and their Heaven would be our Tartarus. Thus, to mankind at large, no one direction is up or down, and it becomes an arbitrary fancy to fix the divine abode in one part of the heavenly vault rather than in another. Moreover, Science has discovered that the stars are at distances from us vastly diverse; that the nearest star is prodigiously more remote from us than is our own sun; and that the idea of a blue crystal vault in which sun and stars are fixed is a mere illusion of the eye. We now understand that God is not more *immediately present* in one point of space than in another, but, wherever we are—in this chapel or in a private chamber—we are for ever in God's immediate presence, for ever in God's own Heaven.

There are many who speak with shuddering of Death, as a passing into the immediate presence of God. Dear friends, the shudder is certainly needless. Solemn the thought must be, happy it ought to be, that God is here, and that you cannot get nearer to him by dying. Many talk of the flesh as a curtain that hides him from us. Only in so far as the flesh is able to distract, to dull, to defile the spirit, can that statement be true. But God certainly is not the less present when our eyes are blinded to the fact of his presence. Man differs from man, and each of us differs from himself, in vividness of conception that God is present; and on this vividness largely depends the energy of spiritual life. In the Sermon on the Mount, according to Matthew, Jesus is reported to say, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they *shall see* God;" but in the Arabic translation (which of all modern tongues comes nearest in genius to the Hebrew in which he spoke), the verb is in the present tense: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they *have vision (*or *insight)* of God;" and to me this carries conviction. Akin to this thought, though not identical, are the epithets in the passage with which I opened, where the prophet makes the High and Holy One say, "I dwell with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit." Moral conditions are primarily needed by those who believe in a Holy God, that they may be able to live in a realization of his presence. The Hebrew prophet seems to have believed, *on the one hand*, that God sympathizes with those who are crushed in body or soul, and, *on the other hand*, that the consciousness of his presence is not a terror, but a comfort, to the afflicted. It revives their heart. And, without further discussing what he meant by *contrite*, we may from this point of view examine the subject.

What makes the thought of a Holy God terrible? Perhaps it will be replied, The consciousness of sin. That is partly true, yet it is not the whole truth. If sin mean only moral imperfection, sin is our state for ever. "God putteth no trust in his servants, and his angels he chargeth with folly"—says the poet in the Book of Job. Surely it is not a sense of imperfection, but a sense of hostility, that makes the nearness of a mighty superior painful. The humble man may perhaps think himself not only lower than the lowest of all saints, but guiltier than many a profligate; nevertheless, if he be contrite in heart, he hates his own iniquity, he longs for holiness, while he knows himself unholy; hence the thought of the Holy God revives his heart, and the consciousness of that purifying presence is a delight. With this harmonizes that utterance of Jesus, "The pure of heart have vision of God." We see most distinctly that for which we look eagerly.

The life of religion is not *opposed* to nature; rather, it is in fullest accordance with our best normal state. Yet it certainly is not natural, in the sense of coming easily or without effort to the individual or to the race. Mankind through long ages had a dim perception of the superior Power in which it unhesitatingly believed, and went through various forms of absurd opinion and wild fancy; the vulgar through ignorance, or the poets through wilfulness, spoiling the best thoughts of more earnest meditators. Thus numerous fantastic religions, which we now call Pagan, arose, some with many noble elements predominant; but in most the baser and sillier fancies swamped the better thoughts.

Very slowly indeed has mankind collectively moved towards more reasonable notions of the divine existence and character. Moreover a constant tendency displays itself to degeneracy and retrogression into old error, so that the latest stages of each creed are apt to be the worst. These facts have occurred on a very wide scale, and scarcely can be mistaken. Maturity of mind, which combines sobriety with active thought, is needed as an intellectual condition for a reasonable theology; also, if national morals be in a degraded state, the same degradation will appear in the religious notions. We now inherit the net results of at least four thousand years' mental history; yet not very many among us can wholly avoid the puerile errors of the past. At the same time, individuals often pass through a special history of their own, ere they can attain for themselves practical results from the notions which they theoretically receive. I do not speak of those who are content with a religion that rests in the head; nor may I digress concerning others who are disquieted by superstitious error. But, apart from all these, some of us are strongly impressed with the conviction, that, *if man alone of earthly beings has a discernment of God, man cannot be without moral relations to God.* Then follows the question, What are those moral relations? and the individual perhaps asks, "Wherein does my perception that God is my God, affect my life?" I call your close attention to this deeply practical question.

No two human minds are quite alike, and the richer the soil the more various is the plant. But though the course by which religion is developed and practically established probably differs in all, yet all these have in common a deep sense that religion is not a mere theory of the intellect, but is a state of heart pervading the whole life. Many go through a process which the old divines call, "Seeking after God," while the heart is inwardly striving to ascertain its due *moral relation* to him, and keep up a happy perception of his near presence. Each of us can but guess at the pains or pleasures in other souls; nevertheless it is reasonable to believe, that unless some moral frailty darken and distort the inward actions, this solemn seeking after God will have its appropriate delight. A Hebrew Psalm seems to allude to it with beautiful simplicity. "O Lord, when thou saidst, 'Seek ye my face,' my heart replied, 'Thy face, Lord! will I seek.'" How childlike and straightforward! No artificial straining, no distraction by bashfulness, no alarm at God's immeasurable grandeur; but, as the philosopher believes that Man has natural relations to Infinite Truth, and that the universe (as it were), calls aloud, inviting us to the study, so the practical worshipper of the Most High believes that man has natural relations with him, and that the Infinite One virtually invites his finite creature to fellowship and intimacy.

This is that, which religious people call the Spirit of God moving within them. They know not what impels them, some day, to address the Unseen Presence as a child speaks to a father. It appears an impulse not their own. When innocent instinct pervades an entire race, we do not ascribe it to the individuals of the race, but to the Author of their nature: much more then the nobler movements of the soul, so far as they are normal to man, may not unreasonably be called the workings of God within us. Hence, says Paul, God has sent forth the spirit of sonship into our hearts. Ordinarily this is the result of the heart's full surrender to God as the centre of all righteousness. When we deliberately judge that the highest virtue is man's best portion and that all sin is shameful and miserable, then the law of the Spirit is to us perfect freedom; a righteous God becomes a lovely object, and our earnest aspiration is that his holy fire may burn out all our unholiness. This desire is the germ of perfect peace; for, our will being subdued to God's will, the sense of his nearness is delightful; and inevitably with it the faith springs up, that the holy will of God must triumph over human sin. No one who is conscious that his will is on God's side, can dread the thought of God's immediate presence; and the belief of our direct moral relations with him is likely to grow up into gradually increasing strength with inward exercises of the heart in this communion.

Does any one present say, that such thoughts are too lofty,—are mystical,—are fanciful? If I could for a moment believe them fanciful, if I did not deem them to be words of entire soberness, I could not utter them here; but that they are mystical, I freely concede. Spiritual religion is nothing, if it be not mystical. To walk as seeing him who is invisible, to be conscious that God is in us, and that we have our life in him, is essentially mystical and mysterious; yet not the less true and certain. Of God himself we can only speak by metaphor and analogy, because our primitive vocabulary is made for things of sense, and is only gradually added to, as experience in things supersensible accumulates. If any one wants a religion which is developed out of, and measured by, Physical Science, he can get it; but it will have no element of spirituality, no relation to human morals, and will be of no concern whatever for daily life, any more than a theory concerning Gravitation or Electricity. But if Religion is to be a universal and moral bond, its very nature is inward, spiritual, mystical; but not the less,—nay, so much the more,—accessible and important to every human soul. If we were to alledge that "Religion is the true poetry of life," we should misrepresent it; yet in common with poetry and all high Art it must have a mystical element.

Sound religion never can delude us into the immoralities of fanaticism: for it does not prescribe and dominate the law of morals, but is dominated thereby. Moral law rests on the universal reason of mankind, and prescribes to religion. True religion submits to this law, not accounting it a yoke or a burden, but a basis, and a purpose for which we are made and live. On this critical point depends its perfect sobriety. The very idea of a Holy God (whether primitively Egyptian or Hebrew or Persian or Buddhist, let antiquarians settle), distinguishes the noble tradition which Christians, Jews, Mohammedans, and Brahmos honour, from the defective counterfeit. "Thus saith the high and lofty One whose name is Holy." Neither to the Pagan nor to the mere Physical philosopher is the supreme Power a Holy Spirit. But when we cannot conceive of God himself but as in harmony with moral law, much more do we regard subjection to moral law as our own noblest and best state; and this is the fit interpretation of the words: "Be ye holy, for I am holy." No inward impressions, imagined to be divine, must be adduced as dictating to us right and wrong. Only when we know our inward suggestions to be intrinsically good, can we presume to attribute them to the Father of Lights, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift. Such is the sufficient reply to those who dread lest spiritual impetus dictate some new and false morality.

A vivid sense of God's presence cannot alter our tranquil estimate of the right and the wrong in human action. It leaves our code of morals wholly undisturbed. It does but stimulate us to act up to our highest convictions of right, and brace us up (where needful) to brave self-sacrifice. In this respect it is comparable to the presence of a revered and elder friend: at least the comparison makes it easy to understand the moral influence of this sublime faith. If our creed no longer comprizes many matters believed by pious men of old, *still* for us as for them remains the truth, that a life of religion is a life of faith. *Still*, as ever, it conduces to the elevation of man by exercising him in the noblest sorrows and the loftiest joys, while it tends also to maintain him in that imperturbable state which Stoicism admired, without any danger of losing tenderness. A bitter and painfully true complaint has of late been uttered against certain physical and metaphysical philosophers, that with Reverence towards God they had lost Mercy towards Brutes, even while maintaining that the human race is derived from brute progenitors. But if we love and trust in a glorious and holy God, who, though he be the lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, yet by his in-dwelling revives every contrite and weak soul of man,—how can we but feel tenderly towards those who are weaker than ourselves? Nay, love to the Unseen and Mighty One is so much harder than compassion to those whom we see, that the higher attainment pre-supposes the lower; insomuch that John the Elder asks, How shall a man who loves not his brother whom he hath seen, love God whom he hath not seen?

Let no one then suppose that religion is or ever could be an affair of opinions and notions, whether concerning historical facts, physics, or metaphysics, any more than it can consist in the endless genealogies and old wives' fables at which good Paul scoffs. What we need is a heart harmonized to our highest attainable morality, devoted to justice and mercy, and thereby to tenderness and purity; a heart thus prepared to rejoice in the belief of a holy God, and esteeming his approbation more than all worldly objects. Through all the devotional Hebrew literature which has been esteemed sacred, and equally in the Christian Scriptures, a remarkable metaphor is stereotyped. *The light of God's countenance* is identified with the highest spiritual joy. That which the eye cannot see, faith alone sees. Thus, to behold the face of God is the bliss of Heaven itself, and is supposed to have a transforming effect on the beholder. "We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." "I shall behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." So deep, fervent, and continuous for more than two thousand years has been the conviction, that mentally to see and know God is both the highest bliss and the most purifying influence. Have we not here an instructive assurance that my present topic is one of sober reality, not of flighty and personal fantasy? Brethren and sisters of my own age, we have not long to abide in this tabernacle of flesh; we are ripe for the supremacy of the spirit. It is high time for us to stay our souls on the thought of the Eternal. And oh ye who are either in full maturity or in the dawn of life, receive kindly the word of exhortation. We have inherited a vast series of noble and instructive experiences, chiefly of Jews and Christians, most diverse in detail, but agreeing notably in the simple faith that God is holy, just, and tender, and that to live in a daily sense of his presence is to walk by faith, and enter into intimate relation with him. Such communion cannot be long together conscious, nor would that be healthful; for it would impede our practical duties to man, which (in my judgment) are the end for which we exist. But the remembrance of God ought to be the happy home, to which the secret heart naturally falls back in the intervals of duty and business. Our strength for self-sacrifice and our buoyancy on the waves of life, the soundness of our moral judgments and the nobleness of our characters, can hardly fail of being increased, when we habitually take delight in a tranquil sense that God is within us and around us. Cultivate this heavenly intimacy in your secret moments, and your reward from it will be great. A Hebrew Psalmist of old, in his own peculiar dialect, expressed this thought energetically:—

"Justice and Judgment are the habitation of thy throne:
Mercy and Truth go before thy face.
Blessed is the people that know this joyful tiding:
They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.
In thy name shall they rejoice all the day,
And in thy righteousness shall they be exalted."

Let me, in conclusion, quote side by side the words of our poet Cowper, where he speaks, not as a sectarian Christian, but as uttering the essence of Christianity:—

"But oh! Thou bounteous giver of all good,
Thou art of all thy gifts thyself the crown.
Give what thou wilt, without thee we are poor,
And with thee rich, take what thou wilt away."

Such, in my vehement conviction, is to be the Religion of the Future.

THE SERVICE OF GOD.

[1875.]

"O Lord, truly I am thy servant. I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid. Thou hast broken my bonds."—PSALM cxvi. 16.

RELIGION has a long history. It is perhaps as old as human nature. At every time it reflects our moral and intellectual state. It is barbarous in our barbarism. It is puerile, while our intellects are immature. It becomes more manly with our manlier thoughts, pure and tender with our more refined morals. The rude or savage man, who discovers in the vast world Powers greater than himself and older than the solid globe, easily believes that some gods are kindly and others cruel. The God who gives genial harvests and healthful seasons is the good God; but the power who wields the hurricane and the lightning seems to be a demon. We know, as a fact, particular tribes to have argued frankly, that it is not necessary to concern ourselves about the good God, who is sure to be kind. The only matter of importance (they said) is, to propitiate the evil demons, and avert their anger. Thus, as a matter of *policy*, demon-worship is put forward as the cardinal task of religion.

But wherein does this worship or service consist? It is assumed that the mighty Being who sometimes crushes feeble man, crushes him through malevolence and cruelty. Such a Being is likely to be proud, vain, jealous; easily affronted, but appeased by submission, by gifts and by flattery. Therefore the service of the god becomes like to that of an earthly tyrant. Worship paid to one somewhat lower in morals than ourselves is degrading to the votary and demoralizing. No one can say into what depths of cruelty to man such fantastic service may descend, if once the ceremonies of worship are systematized and receive traditional sanction from national usages and law.

Thus, in order that worship or service to God may be healthful, rightful, elevating, ennobling, the first essential condition is, that we believe God to be *better* than ourselves; not merely more powerful, but better, in every sense in which we can understand goodness. It needs no high effort of thought, no especial power of insight, to establish as a sure foundation, that, if a Supreme God have any moral character at all, his morality must be nobler than ours. In any case our petty vices are in him simply impossible. He cannot be irritable, jealous, thinking of his own honour, capricious, malignant, fickle, fantastic. He does not need offerings of food or of flowers, roast flesh or honey-cakes, garlands of leaves, nor crowns of gold. He needs no house built for his dwelling-place or sleeping-rooms. He will not wear robes of State, though they be woven for him of fine purple and edged with gold brocade. What then can we do to *serve* such a Being, who wants for himself nothing at our hands?

It is within the compass of the humblest intellect, so soon as man or woman thinks freely and definitely, to make sure, that if God desire us to *serve* him, it is not for his advantage or comfort or pride, but for our benefit. We ought to revere him; why? Because we are the better for revering him. But again, why so? Because reverence intrinsically befits us, if he indeed be supreme in goodness and wisdom, as well as in duration and power. For one who is still a child to look up with admiration to a loving father, is always good, because a mature man is far higher in wisdom and goodness than a child; but reverence of one man for another man is not, as such, intrinsically good, and may be pernicious. Reverence rightly directed, towards one who unquestionably deserves it, softens, chastens, and confirms moral character, and has no element of servility in it. To have no object whom we revere, generally belongs to self-conceit, flippancy, shallowness of heart. "To be Reverent is Wisdom," says a philosophic Greek poet; and the voice of mankind classes irreverence among vices. Yet (as above said) to revere a God to whom we attribute mean vices, is evil and not good. That religion may be beneficial, it must be pure; that it may be pure, criticism of it must be free; no worship of false gods is endurable to true piety. If it be *possible* sincerely to adore a being morally below us (which may greatly be doubted), such worship is at best a galling slavery. But when the worshipper discerns that his God is supremely good, and deserves to be loved with all the heart and soul, his chains drop off, and he may justly cry: "Thou hast broken my bonds. Thy service is perfect freedom. Oh tell me what I am to do. Speak, Lord! for thy servant heareth. Blessed are they who do thy commandments. Lord! teach me thy statutes. Oh that I could hear thy voice!"

But no voice from heaven is heard in reply to such aspirations.

The wisdom of God draws out our own powers, and, to do this, never dictates as an earthly preceptor, but works on our hearts and intellects by many an inward experience and many an outward event. That elementary religion which we call Pagan can hardly now be recognized by us as religion at all. We may contemptuously call it "carnal ordinances," so long as it is external and corporate. But from the day that religion is treated as no longer a corporate affair to be transacted by a priest or a church, but a matter internal to the individual soul,—thenceforward it is nearly true to say that each of us has to *earn* his own religious beliefs. Morals are dictated to us by the human race in the most critical matters; but neither mankind nor any individual can profitably dictate on spiritual religion. At most one may confidentially tell to another his inward convictions, and how his doubts and difficulties were removed; but different minds are liable to (what may be called) different *diseases*, and are relieved by different remedies. It is lovely and truly hopeful when, in opening youth, ardent hearts aspire to dedicate life to the service of God; yet nothing is commoner than for the worshipper, after a glow of zealous devotion, to lament that his earthly heart cannot keep it up. Then he inquires, "Is there any means of sustaining religious affection, so that I may always *feel* that I love God, as I did for a little while? Is it a sin that I am cold and dead, when I know that I ought to rejoice in his supreme goodness?" This is but one of many ways in which sincere hearts are disquieted; yet a few words may here be in place.

We must not mistake religious emotion for religion. Reverence implies a definite position of the understanding and the moral judgment. This ought to be a permanent state, which shows itself whenever the thought of the Most High recurs to the mind. But every emotion is transitory. Each is most healthy when most spontaneous. To excite feeling artificially is unhealthful, and tends to increase deadness. It suffices to have the conviction deep in our understandings that God deserves to be loved; we cannot always have love to Him active and sensible. But to say this is not to say half of what truth seems to demand. The religious affections are good in their place; they are right (as above said) because they intrinsically befit us; in greater or less intensity they are necessary to religion. But as we must refuse to believe that God, like a weak, vain man, is jealous for his own honour, so must we beware of the stealthy idea that he resents coldness or exacts gratitude. The religious affections are not the service of God. Religion itself is the true *service of God*, and it is exhibited mainly in right conduct towards MAN. This, in my apprehension, is the cardinal doctrine which the Church of the Future has to make prominent, and, as it were, bear aloft upon her flag. It certainly has not been duly prominent in the past, and is very often flatly denied. As the Hebrew prophets represented Jehovah saying, "I need not your sacrifices of bullocks and rams: if I am hungry, I will not ask food of you," so must we now insist that God is not benefited by our psalms and hymns, nor is less glorious or less blessed, if defrauded of our praise and gratitude. On our own account it is good to draw near to him and worship inwardly; but to make the service of God *consist* in this is, at bottom, the same error as to identify the useless and selfish life of a hermit with religious life.

That wise religion has its highest and ultimate goal in right behaviour towards our fellow-men, is not distinctly expressed in the Hebrew or Christian Scriptures; yet (I think) is often implied by Christian Apostles and by Jesus himself; also in the celebrated passage of Micah, which sums up man's duty to God in justice and mercy, and humility or sobriety before God. It seems impossible to find books richer in urgent exhortations concerning outward conduct than the Apostolic Epistles and the three first Gospels. Nevertheless, all the books of the New Testament are so overlaid with notional matter that the historical Christian Church was seduced into making doctrines and creeds paramount. In consequence men, celebrated as eminent philosophers, have imagined that in Christianity practical virtue is disesteemed. That ceremonies may and do choke and bury true religion is a familiar thought to all who honour the name Protestant. That theories, doctrines, controversies, religious emotion and efforts to kindle emotion may be mischievous in the same way, many Protestants are not duly aware. Theology, as science or art, is but a *means;* our SOCIAL PERFECTION is the *end* which theology ought to subserve. To attain *such* perfection as men and women *can* attain in their mutual relations is the highest service of God.

A misconception of this statement is more than possible, and must be carefully guarded against. Misconception may arise out of the common distinction between personal vice and crimes or offences against society; also between personal virtue and social virtue. We must not mistake *such* outward action as alone the law of the land can *command*, or even such as alone society can *claim* from us, for the substance of religious life. Every personal vice, in truth, makes us worse citizens, nor do any virtues *so* redound in blessing to society as purely spiritual virtues. The earliest scientific treatise on morals known to the Western world maintained that justice included all virtue, for to be defective in any virtue was a fraud on society. Justice, *strictly interpreted*, was identical with righteousness. There is truth in this.

To do an act of kindness is acceptable to our neighbours, but to do it ungraciously may destroy all pleasure from it and nearly all its value. It is not the outward act only which kindles gratitude or affection, but the act as indicating the temper of the doer. The dullest of us is, after all, a spiritual being; we love men for their goodness, even more than for their usefulness to ourselves. If destitute, we covet supplies necessary to life; but man does not *love* for bread alone. We wish for respect, for good-will, for friendliness. We are quick to discern when another is contemptuous, proud, selfish, ungoverned, grasping. All vices, however internal and hidden away, are disagreeable to us; and, if they abound in our neighbours, lessen our happiness and even our sense of security. Sensual vice, it need hardly be insisted, is manifestly pernicious to others as well as to the vicious person. A drunkard is a bad husband, a bad father, a bad son, a bad citizen in general. The seducer of female virtue is pernicious in the highest degree; the man of impure life is a centre of corruption and a propagator of misery. Gluttony is the greatest cause of disease, and variously incapacitates us. Those who make their gain by encouraging vice are among the very worst citizens. To foster hatred *within*, of that which would degrade us *without*, to simplify our habits so as to be contented with little, may seem at first purely personal virtues, yet without them we are not armed against temptation, nor competent for warfare with social misery. Hence a Christian Apostle regarded spiritual virtues collectively as the weapons and armour of God, for battle against the wicked spirits who domineer in the world. In this noble combat we need to put on not only tender mercies, patience, and universal good-will, but also those virtues of the soldier—hardihood and self-denial, frugality and bravery. Paul is represented (in substance, I doubt not, correctly) as leaving with the elders of Ephesus his last solemn charges, and, as it were, his dying words: "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel: yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered to my necessities and to them that were with me. I have showed you that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and remember those words of the Lord Jesus,—It is more blessed to give than to receive." Some one has said that Jesus kindled on earth an enthusiasm of humanity. To me it is clear that through the whole book, which we call the New Testament, there burns an enthusiasm for moral perfection. Our task in this later age is to cull the noblest flowers of Christian precepts, just as did the Apostles from the Prophets and Psalmists who had preceded them, avoiding the errors incident to the earlier era, and adding whatever wisdom the long lapse of time has bequeathed to us.

Is then *the service of God*, as interpreted by Christian Apostles, quite identical with that to which we now ought to exhort one another? Not quite identical, I think. They believed that King Messiah would return in the clouds of heaven, to set up a rule of righteousness on earth. They saw the gross injustices of princely power and institutions founded on conquest; but to defeat iniquity enthroned in high station seemed to them far too hard a task for any one but the Lord from heaven. To behold the kingdoms of this world under the reign of God and his Christ was the sight for which their hearts ached; but the only work for others to which they believed themselves called, was, to prepare the elect,—a small remnant of mankind,—for entering into God's kingdom. We cannot blame them as weak in faith, because they despaired of overthrowing organized violence without miraculous intervention. In fact, the primitive gospel or good news announced, what long experience has convicted as an error;—namely, that the Lord Messiah himself would very shortly descend from heaven with innumerable angels and a trumpet sound, to claim his rightful royalty over earth, and trample down the wicked princes who ruled by the unseen might of Satan, God's arch enemy. Then would come the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; then righteousness would flourish, and all the prophecies be gloriously fulfilled. Reluctantly, slowly, and by necessity, Christians at length resigned this splendid vision, and learned that to leave political affairs to the management of bad men was not the part of wisdom and duty: but alas! forthwith arose an insatiable ambition to invest Church Officers with the wealth, power, and prerogatives of Pagan princes. Out of this has flowed a total perversion of Christianity, and, for one thousand five hundred years, incessant conflicts which abounded with misery and innumerable moral evils; yet probably were inevitable in some other shape, if they had not come in this shape. From her more than millennial agony Christendom emerges far stronger and far wiser. We now discern what has been the error. True religion ought to *consecrate* all our worldly action, not to disparage, to decry, and to *desecrate* the world. Herein is the pivot of our new departure. We need to revert to an older wisdom, which taught* that "God hath granted to us on this earth a small plot; and this is that which we must cultivate and glorify." Religious action does not consist in propagating religious opinions, nor even in cherishing religious emotions; but in *being* good and *doing* good. To desecrate the word *secular*, is akin to desecrating *marriage;* each should be ennobled, not disparaged. This world is not to be abandoned to men selfishly greedy and ambitious, but is to be defended and rescued from them by the concordant efforts of God's true servants. Unjust and corrupting institutions, evil laws, reckless government, are not to be left unmolested. Since bad law is of all bad things most widely and deeply efficacious for evil, while good law is of all good influences the mildest and most effective for good; therefore, to purify laws and institutions is a primary mode of establishing the kingdom of God on earth. In no other way can the *roots* of moral evil be torn up. It has often been said, that three days' drunkenness, fostered by ambition to aid electioneering intrigues, undo the work of three years' preaching. This is but one illustration out of fifty, and not at all the strongest, denoting how futile is a moral crusade, if it will not attack political villainies. Hitherto, among Protestants, all national progress in morals has been retarded, just in proportion as they have recalled from the first Christian ages the doctrine that the saint is *not* a citizen of this world; that the kingdoms of this world are incurably wicked; that the devil and his angels are to be left in possession of political principality; that Christians have nothing to do with making the national institutions just, and the law moral. The doctrine of Geneva, of Scotland and of the English Puritans, took a course which avoided this rock of offence, but ran upon another, nearly as Rome has done,—a rock which we misname Theocracy: but the Lutherans, and the Anglican Evangelicals, the Moravians, the Quietists, and other sects, with many estimable persons, in striving to recover the original position of the Christian Church, overlooked both our vast differences of circumstance, and the glaring fact that that Church erred in expecting the speedy overthrow of political wrong by a miraculous intervention. Without full self-consciousness or clear knowledge of the past, all the Churches of England are now waking to their duty of purifying the fountains of our daily life. Herein lies the germ of a new religion; new to us, if in some sense old. They are those who believe that this new religion is what Jesus meant to teach (but his words, say they, have been garbled),—that when from human sympathy one man relieves another, who is a captive, or sick, or hungry, or naked, *though he do it without dreaming to serve God or thinking of God at all*, yet the Supreme Judge recognizes it as service done to himself. This is neither place nor time for inquiring into the truth of the interpretation. Suffice it to say, that goodness is amiable, with or without religious thought; that man needs our services, and God does not need our love any more than our flattery, and that in affectionate, dutiful or merciful acts towards our fellow-men we best become joint-workers with God. This is the earliest religion possible to childhood, the only religion which can commend itself to the barbarian conscience.

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* *Σπάρτην ἔλαχες · ταύτην κόσμει.*

Will any one call it a poetical fiction, that all the universe, inorganic, brute or barbarian, is doing the work of God, obeying his command, fulfilling his *service?* alike the suns and planets, the elements and seasons, the beasts and birds, tribes of savages and ignorant masses of men? God makes the very wrath of man to praise him, out of discord bringing harmony. How much more ought we to recognize as *his servants* that vast army of mute toilers, the poor of every nation, prevalently simple and ignorant, and despised as "the herd of mankind," though often nobly unselfish and gloriously heroic? The same may be said of the patient inventors and perfecters of mechanical and other civilizing art. Let no man despise man; for we are all of one blood, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Adam acknowledge us not. The love of God embraces us all; therefore it is very fit, right, and our bounden duty, to study the benefit of this human family as our highest service to the common Father. Serving man we best serve God; he that will be greatest among us, let him be the servant of all. In that service is love and joy: love, which is forgetful of self; joy, in the lofty faith, which is sure that Right must triumph.

SIN AGAINST GOD.

[1875.]

> "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"—
> GEN. xxxix 9.

IN popular speech we often distinguish four kinds of evil action; 1. Legal offences of greater or less gravity, whether called crime, or misdemeanour, or injury; 2. Social offence, such as ingratitude, rudeness, stinginess; 3. Offences against oneself, often called vice; 4. Offence against God, called sin. It is convenient to have these distinctive words, but we must not suppose that an action which belongs to one of these four classes cannot also belong to another. The same wrong deed may be crime and also ingratitude; or may be crime and also vice; perhaps every vice justly viewed, is a social offence, and some vices are legal offences. Nothing therefore hinders the same act from being at once a crime and a sin, or a vice and a sin. To speak more generally, the same deed may be an offence against the law, an offence against society, an offence against oneself, and an offence against God. Therefore we find nothing incongruous in treating all immorality as sin.

Nevertheless, because extreme, painful, cruel inferences have been drawn from this belief, pious as it is in itself and wholesome, therefore in recent times a strong current of objection has set in; and it is maintained by some, that no wickedness ought to be regarded as committed against God. Perhaps this may seem to you too strange and perverse an error to deserve refutation: but we cannot afford to neglect it, for it has been provoked, as I said, by extreme religious doctrine. A very large school of Christians has alledged, that, God being an infinite Being, sin against Him is an infinite evil, deserving infinite punishment; and that every moral failure, however trifling, as the peevishness or anger of a child, is a sin, and is therefore an infinite evil. Surely it suffices to disown the extravagance of measuring the evil of sin by the greatness of God, whom it certainly cannot harm. But this very fact, that He is too great to be harmed by us, or to be in any respect impaired as to blessedness and glory, is adduced to prove that sin is nothing to Him, and that He cannot rightly be said to be ever sinned against. Hereby, honest reasoners think, they best lay the axe to many false pernicious doctrines, and to the morbid state of conscience into which not a few religious persons fall, while groaning under the sense of sin and demerit. Once allow, they say, that murder is a sin against God, and it will follow, so is the intent to murder, and all the more, since an intent can hardly be called a sin against man; so then also is malice a sin against God, so is anger, so is peevishness; and if in an adult, so also in a young person; then where shall we stop? Not only must we say with the nursery rhyme, "It is a sin to steal a pin," but every childish fault of temper is brought under reprehension far too grave and really pernicious. Such argument is plausible and now widespread. All the old received notions of religion are now exposed to severe criticism, for which reason I think it not amiss to attempt examining this topic to the bottom.

I entirely admit and maintain, that our moral advancement is the proper end of religion, and that moral conduct presupposes social relations between finite and mutually dependent beings. Most of our virtues imply human weakness; hence they cannot be attributed to the Most High. No one can praise God for his bravery, for his modesty, for his candour; for honesty or chastity or temperance; for circumspection or prudence. These qualities are accounted virtues by reason of their fitness and importance to human life, and because of our essential weakness. They express our best state, and religion ought to aid us towards that best state, which in its highest development we call righteousness and holiness. But if we are conscious of failure, if we confess to our inmost hearts and to God that we have done wrong, we must not let the thought enter, that we have lessened God's honour or bliss,—which would absurdly magnify our importance; nor must we imagine that He can feel resentment at our neglect, —an idea which in a manner reduces him to our level. Thus, no breach of morality can be an offence against God *in the very same sense* in which it is an offence against an individual man, who may be wronged and justly indignant with us, and need to be appeased or compensated. In no case can God need compensation from us, in no case can He be angry and require to be soothed and propitiated. If we have wronged a brother man, then so soon as we discern and confess our fault, and are eager to redress the wrong, no further process is required for wiping out sin against God. So far then it may be conceded, that those who would blot the word Sin from our vocabulary are more right, or perhaps I ought to say, they are less wrong, than those who talk of propitiation, of atonement, of infinite demerit, and of Divine wrath. Nevertheless it is most fit and necessary that the word and idea Sin, should be sedulously retained and applied in all our familiar thoughts. It remains true as ever, that crime and vice, and wilful folly, are sins against God. On this I proceed to insist.

Certain great crimes are by the voice of mankind entitled unnatural. If a woman destroy her infant, she is held not only to commit wrong against the child and to break the law of the land, but to offend against nature; or, as we often express it, to violate the law of nature; because all easily perceive that on such a matter nature has a law. Whenever we say that a deed is wrong in itself, whether it be or be not forbidden in a particular national code, we virtually pronounce that there is a law of nature against it. To be ungrateful to a benefactor who has made great sacrifices for us, is not forbidden, for instance, by English law, because the offence is too hard to define; but we all see that it is intrinsically wrong. And the same may be said, not of actions only, but also of inward movements of the heart. To hate a man because we have injured him, and therefore the very sight of him seems to reproach us; or to hate him because he has benefited us, and therefore the remembrance of his benefit humiliates us,—each of these is an offence, not against any artificial or local law, yet against nature herself. Surely then, one who believes in God at all, must discern that every movement of the human soul which is out of harmony with nature is out of harmony with God, who pervades, guides, enforces nature, and thereby both creates and rules. But the weakness and frailty of a mere child, so far from being against nature, is calculated on by every parent, and may rather be said to be according to nature. Hence, to entitle the anger of an infant, disappointed in some petty hope or expectation, a sin against God, has no propriety whatever. As we gradually grow up into moral beings, so do we gradually assume moral responsibility, with all the high capacity of joy and sorrow, nobleness or baseness, holiness or sin. This is true manhood, or, as the oldest of Greek poets calls it, glorious manhood. Good sense is needed in our judgments of human character and action, not to apply a high and severe rule to persons and cases who do not rightly fall under it. And on those who are morbid in conscience, and reprove themselves too severely for inward sins,—as it is said of some one, that he thought himself a hell-deserving sinner, because he had been made vain by praise of his poetry,—on such persons we need not urge that no wickedness is sin against God, as some would tell us; but it suffices to insist that a just and wise God, cannot be less kind and discriminating than an ordinary good man. It is only when a monstrously erroneous idea of the Divine Character has been enshrined and glorified in a false theory of religion, that a morbid exaggeration of the sinfulness of every frailty is at all to be feared. Undoubtedly with the vast majority of mankind the very opposite is the danger; we excuse and make light of our frailties, faults, or vices; nay, even of our injustices.

Thus far, it has been shown that, if we believe in a God who has ordained nature,—if we further believe that the true and legitimate precepts of morals inhere in human nature itself, and are coeval with man in man's world; it follows, that every wilful commission of immorality is an offence against the laws of human nature, and *therefore*, against the *God* of nature. This last step, though, I think, necessitated by sound reasoning, is more than a verbal difference. To offend against a blind and pitiless Nature, as against winds and waves, may be a grievous folly; but the sense of our wrongfulness is then in kind different, from the sense that we have sinned against a loving and wise God. Conflict with brute force is one thing, contact of spirit with spirit is another. The sense that we are struggling against iron laws of necessity may paralyze us with despair or may sober us into prudential evasion, but never softens and melts the heart. Faith that God is good and wise, makes His ordinances sacred, puts us to shame and calls out our self-condemnation, if we have violated them; in short, converts our wills to the side of righteousness. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." I do not deny, that even without any sense of a holy God, morals may become spiritual. When a man not only *acts* justly and mercifully, but *delights* in justice and mercy, and is attracted to love just and merciful men for their very virtue, and hates injustice and cruelty for their own sake; his love, his joy, his hatred, are spiritual, even though his theories may be, or seem to us, atheistic. But a spiritual faith, which discerns a holy God, who sympathizes with the spirit of man when it strives after harmony with His wise enactments, certainly gives a great aid to moral aspiration, and ought to issue in a more complete and loving obedience. Herein lies the true glory and strength of Christianity, the strength which has upheld it, in spite of countless fables and mischievous falsehoods encumbering and marring it. Apostle differs from Apostle in diverse points, and nearly all add something to Jesus: but all agree in earnest exhortation to practical virtue and inward holiness as the end of faith, even when they couple it with a creed of doubtful disputation. "Every one that doeth righteousness is born of God;" says John the Elder: "in this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. He that keepeth God's commandments dwelleth in God, and God in him." Peter also (if Peter it be), says that "God hath called us to glory and virtue," and that "by His great and precious promises the readers of the Epistle have escaped the corruptions of the world and become partakers of the Divine nature. What manner of persons then ought they to be in all holy conduct and godliness; peaceable, spotless, and blameless!" "Pure religion and undefiled before God," says James, "is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and keep oneself unspotted from the world." Also against all spiritual pride and wrath of zeal, or other vices of conceited orthodoxy, James, the earliest of Christian Bishops, is as emphatic as against vulgar vice. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (perhaps Apollos) declares that Holiness is the end for which God trains and chastises His people, and is the condition without which none can see the Lord. Paul is as copious and detailed in practical exhortation as in transcendental dogma, and again and again sets forth, that the very object of Christian faith is "to build up the saints into a holy temple, in which God may dwell by His spirit." To maintain a daily faith that God overlooks our life, claiming of us abstinence from evil, and pointing to right conduct as our noblest and best portion, is certainly of high moral value. And this is really what is meant by accounting moral offence a sin against God. I have said, that this is emphatically set forth by the original Christian teachers; nevertheless, it was not new in Christianity. In the Hebrew Psalms and in parts of the Hebrew prophets, also in the Proverbs, we have manifold expressions of the same sentiment, coupled with avowals of delight in obedience to God's law, and aspiration after higher and nobler virtue, as the best gift which the Most High Himself can bestow. So much I say, in justice to the Hebrew sages and the earlier religion, which Christians are apt unduly to disparage. But there is a topic yet beyond, which I have not yet opened.

If I believe that the Infinite Mind, which is aware of everything everywhere, looks with approval, complacency and sympathy on my efforts to harmonize my conduct and character with His holy will, and on the contrary disapproves my sinful opposition; this belief brings me into direct personal confronting with His serene august presence. Wise and reasonable religion cannot be a mere theory: it must be a life. This is the main point which I would earnestly impress on you. A true faith draws the heart into some form of intercourse with God, even when its utterances are incoherent and undigested intellectually; and whenever such communion is constantly and deliberately sought after, it entails a positive dedication of the soul to God as its reasonable and happy service. To live in conformity to nature, was the aspiration of the noble Stoic; to live in conscious harmony with God, is an aspiration still more blessed. The conscience becomes tenderer by all such inward devotion. It is felt as a wretched and an odious thing to be the slave of any evil habit, or any ungoverned passion, or of ignoble frivolity or indolence; and equally so, to be guilty of selfishness, which is generally unjust. Small frailties, once unnoticed, soon stand out in glaring light, and are now accounted vices which we are bound to subdue; thus the aspiration of the soul has a loftier standard than before. This is the commencement of a higher inward life, in which the person becomes conscious that he properly belongs to God. In Paul's emphatic language, "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord. Whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's." We may be quite sure, that no soul of man ever went through that stage of sentiment, without holy joy and unspeakable content. Out of this springs a new sense of ingratitude quite unendurable, if, overcome by baser attractions, we again permit ourselves to live by a lower standard,—say, that of a majority of the less scrupulous and worse taught. More than ever then do we necessarily judge, that to act wrongfully is, in us, *to sin against God*, and grieve His Holy Spirit within our hearts. For to have faith in a pure and loving God, makes us love the contemplation of Him and rejoice in His conscious company. What an honour is that! how great a joy! What more base than to sacrifice it for some worldly gratification! Therefore, it is no longer some great iniquity, no longer that only which the world will call wickedness, that we feel constrained to pronounce "sin against God," but everything which, we are conscious, puts a cloud between us and Him, everything that impedes the approach of the heart as of a simple child to a glorious and loving Father. You come, I suppose, Sunday by Sunday, to church. You mean to be religious. Dear friends, raise your aspirations high, and expect more and more from pure and undefiled religion. In the antiquated phrase of the Old Testament I may say, Open thy mouth wide and God will fill it. "Lift up your hearts!" says the minister to the people in the Anglican Liturgy. The people reply, "We lift them up to the Lord." Let this be your reply also. Be not satisfied with a routine of presenting your body here or elsewhere as on a sacred day. Let all days be sacred to you. Since each of you is a spiritual being, endowed with a capacity of perceiving and partially knowing God, claim your high privilege; act and live in an abiding sense that you belong to God and are in the noblest sense *His.* Cultivate conscientiousness diligently; be truthful with yourselves. "Who can understand his errors?" says the Hebrew Psalmist: "cleanse thou me from secret faults. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be alway acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer." Living in this spirit, you will need no priesthood to dictate religious creeds to you. Wisdom of heart will increase, enabling you to discriminate wheat from chaff in miscellaneous teaching, writing and talk. Moral truth has ever abounded in cultivated nations; but the admixture of error, and follies called sacred, have ever been the embarrassment to learners. For the discrimination we do not need scholastic erudition or materialistic science, but pure foundations of moral sentiment, and the earnest striving of the heart after a noble life. "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." They who seek to be alive in the Spirit will learn to walk in the Spirit. And the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, and every form of virtue. The schisms and wranglings which from the days of Paul to the present moment have been the disgrace and the weakness of Christianity will gradually vanish, in proportion as all cherish practical righteousness as the end for which God has ordained us.

HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS.

[1876.]

> "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled."

AFTER what do men naturally and even necessarily hunger and thirst? The question may seem to answer itself. We hunger after food; we thirst for refreshing drink. In a wider sense we hunger after all bodily needs, as clothing and shelter, and repose after toil. The first necessities of man are those of the animal; and when these are satisfied, there is in our nature a universal craving for something of ornament, something of beauty, superadded to the supplies that are indispensable. One who begins to adorn his house or his apartment manifests that he is not quite miserable. He is lifted one stage above the desires fundamental to animal life into a region of mental desire. His idea of beauty may be childish and far from noble, yet he is elevated at least a little by it, and, it would seem, he rises hereby above other animals. It is a first distinction, yet only the beginning of a long and apparently endless series by which mankind is destined to ascend higher and higher. Our hunger and thirst become transferred into other and still nobler aims.

The professed students of animated nature are of late inculcating the doctrine, that mankind has been born out of primitive brute races. Undoubtedly our origin is a mystery: its research may be an ingenious theory: nevertheless, a practical fact meets us, clear, strong, and certain,—that the gap between man and the highest brute is vast. Subtlety is wasted in trying to explain it away. It is said that the elephant and the dog *reason*. Be it so: but no one sees in them any discernment of God or of a superior spirit or of any supersensible existence. Man has been called the sole priest of God on earth, because none besides him worships the Unseen. Side by side with this fact stands another closely akin. None but he forms any ideal of moral conduct: none strives upward towards a life nobler than that of sense: no brute is capable of hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Man is capable of aspiring to an ideal, as well as of worshipping the Unseen; other minds are not. Herein lies the insurmountable distinction between man and brute.

Yet it is very slowly that any tribes of men have risen into devout longings after moral goodness. The primary and fundamental idea of right conduct is that of Duty owing from man to man, Duty enforced either by public law or by social opinion. Hence the measure of Right and Wrong is for a long time found in the judgments of the neighbours and superiors. A little people which lives besides dangerous enemies needs defence by every man who can bear arms: Bravery is thereupon made the chief virtue and is almost identified with excellence. Aspiring men then hunger for good repute among their own people: that there is any higher standard of goodness, does not occur to them. Praise is desired, not Righteousness. When they do wrong, Ignominy is feared, not Sin; and when Ignominy befals them, Mortification is felt, not Penitence, not Contrition. This is a necessary stage in man's history. It is no more to be blamed, than childish inexperience is to be blamed. It is a childish state, in which many nations continue long. If they hear of earnest desire to be delivered from Sin, and that there is an instinct of the human heart which aspires to Righteousness, they are surprized,—even puzzled, and avow that *they* know nothing of such instinct.

"Who is a good man?" is a question put by a Roman poet. He replies, "Whoever observes the decrees of the senate, the statute-law, and men's established rights." There was no philosophy in that reply; nevertheless, it must be admitted, the mass of mankind generally acquiesce in the demands of local law, as a sufficient code of morals and guide to right. Not so the mind on which a higher light has dawned; which sees special nationalities to be separately fallible, and that when the voice of many peoples combines, it is authoritative only because it echoes the voice of God speaking in the universal conscience. Besides, all thoughtful minds are aware, how small a part of human goodness can be commanded by the laws of any land: therefore we need to aim at a far higher righteousness.

But here let me dwell for a moment on the epithet *righteous*, which the French translate by their word *just*. The Hebrew adjective which it represents, which also still exists in the spoken Arabic, remarkably combines the idea of Justice and Mercy;

hence to us the English word Just very insufficiently represents it. "To hunger and thirst after justice" would not at all convey to us the right idea: the righteousness intended rather includes all moral excellence. Civil Justice indeed has been defined to mean "other people's good;" and inasmuch as all vice lessens our ability for duty and service, it has been argued that Justice, rightly understood, includes all virtue between man and man. Undoubtedly this is the full meaning which we attach to the word Righteousness, a word rising almost above morality into religion.

Even in the lowest human tribes there is some groping after an unknown Being or Beings whose favour they seek, whose anger they fear. Childish man had childish thoughts, yet never could be content without an effort to solve the question:—Where and What is God?—Rather than have no answer, a grotesque and even pernicious doctrine was accepted. Early attempts at Science, equally with early efforts at Religion, were superficial and weak, in great measure from undervaluing the many sources of delusion and the consequent difficulties of research. In religious thought even nations no longer barbarous have shown barbaric credulity. One general doctrine indeed is common to all: namely, that Religion consists in *Honour to the Gods;* but when the inquiry recurred—"*How* are we to honour them?" grave diversity of opinion was elicited. The superficial idea, that *gifts* could please the gods,—gifts of food, of flowers or other beauty, or limbs of slain animals—this idea could not long commend itself to the wiser. But secondly, sometimes the theory was advanced, that God was jealous, if man became too rich or too prosperous. It was argued: "God's thunderbolt smites lofty trees and towers, while lowly objects fret him not at all." Hence a man who was too prosperous strove to appease divine jealousy by throwing precious things into the sea or into the fire; else by slaying fine horses, nay, it might be, a son or a daughter. Thus folly and cruelty came out of perverse religion, though on the whole such extreme was rare and exceptional. Thirdly, akin to this was another form of self-inflicted suffering. When men began to rise above the atmosphere of sense, and to meditate how much nobler the spirit is than the body, and reflect that the gods must be spiritual and pleased with things spiritual, some devotees originated the idea, that the flesh is the cause and core of evil, and that to mortify the flesh must be the way of pleasing God and aspiring towards his likeness. Hence fasting—that is, partial or entire abstinence from food, became a religious ordinance, and was esteemed to be a righteousness: also abstinence from marriage, penances, scourging, even self-mutilation and other cruel bodily inflictions. Out of all this grew a new evil. Inasmuch as any marring of the body disabled men for ordinary life, only a few out of the multitude could in this way be righteous. Hereby arose the very pernicious idea, that holiness belonged to a select Order of men or women,—priests, monks, nuns,—not to our whole race. We were to delegate our religion, that is, all high virtue, to proxies.—When to these pitiable errors was added a worse, a detestable doctrine, that the person who did not believe, accept, practise and honour the doctrines sanctioned by the priests and pontiff, was an enemy of God and deserved no mercy of man;—the ecclesiastical system thus built up became inhuman and odious. On this account many widely informed and free-minded men came to hate the very profession of religion, and it is to be feared that even now more than a few regard it as a calamity that mankind have an innate and insuperable tendency to search after God and worship him, imagining that this is a part of Righteousness. Strange to add, the upholders of religious error scold against mankind, as naturally *ir*religious. Nay, but we are naturally religious; only some are driven away from religion by the follies or cruelties of pretentious religious systems.

We must of course admit the credulity of rude mankind. We cannot but deplore what so often happens, that public law nails down upon a nation the religious errors of less enlightened times, and prolongs their existence artificially. Yet we must not conclude that the earlier and crude efforts of religious thought were wholly without valuable result. Rudimental religion was almost identical with rudimental science, and much enlarged the world of man to the imagination of man. Consider how very small is the world of even the noblest beasts. The horse notices his pasture and its fences. If he travel, he has a very retentive memory of the road; but it would seem, only near objects draw his attention. The pure breath of the mountain or the desert, equally with the favourite herbage, attracts the healthy animal: but beautiful scenes which feed the eye, are too spiritual an enjoyment even for the horse or the elephant. The glorious canopy of the stars overhead allures the gaze of man, but of man alone. His upright form lifts his face towards heaven, whence the rudest barbarian drinks-in floods of mysterious thought unknown to the brute races. Religious speculation thereupon opens a still wider world, asking: Whence did we come? Where and What is the primal power which gave us being? What is his relation to us now?—The answers to these questions may be shallow in the extreme, yet the questions themselves cannot dwell upon the mind without a grand result to the thoughtful; namely, a conviction sinks deep, that behind the seen and sensible is an unseen world, behind the material is a spiritual world, behind our transitory life is an unchanging Power. —Pure Atheism is partial and exceptional, if ever real. *Some* Long-lasting Power, whose limits are by us unassignable, stands out to our convictions as an undeniable fact; and the mind which thus discerns God finds itself in some sense akin to God, spirit to spirit, from whom our spiritual being is derived.

The higher minds of every cultivated nation, when they cast off antiquated errors without despairing of religious truth, are not slow to discern that the only way to honour God is by obeying the laws of God; which laws are to be discovered by a study of our own nature and of the world that surrounds us. To one who looks on the Universe as the work of God, Nature is *one side* of God manifest. To live according to Nature is the most obvious way of trying to live according to the law of God. Now as man is not a solitary being, but born in a family and soon ushered into a community; as he cannot ordinarily live at all, and at least in any security and comfort, except by mutual aid and cordial co-operation, social life is eminently a part of his nature, nor can he live according to the laws of Nature and of God, except by a scrupulous performance of social duty. Thus right moral conduct becomes a primary precept of advancing and noble religion. Moral right must be judged of by a study of man and society. Religion cannot dictate what things are right: it takes morality for granted and well-known: nevertheless it adds energy to moral precept, urging us to charity and purity, truth and justice, industry and bravery, as the proper and direct way of pleasing God.

You will see at once, that when such a conviction begins to prevail, a new and nobler estimate of the Divine character is formed by the devout mind. The idea that God is malignant, jealous, wrathful, capricious, is discarded with contempt. That he must desire the perfection of all his creatures, each according to its own nature, becomes an Axiom; and among men in particular the performance of mutual duty is presumed to be according to God's will. In this stage, the two phrases, *a religious man* and *a good man* become almost exchangeable. At least, if we have to admit, that in rare cases a man may be esteemed good without religion (though probably less good than the same man would have been with religion), yet no man is truly and wisely religious who does not strive to be good, does not hunger after righteousness.

A Roman moralist has put into two verses nearly the following sentiment:

> "Bad men hate sin through fear of punishment:
> Good men hate sin through very love of virtue."

Herein undoubtedly is a real and deep distinction. The same conduct may be pursued from different motives. We must not undervalue any right conduct: yet a man is not yet virtuous in any high sense, if merely his conduct is right: his heart, as we call it, needs to be right also. The springs of action test the character. Each man's moral position is determined mainly by his loves and his hatreds, and the chief emphasis of religion is in intensifying right loves and right hatreds. To infuse an energetic love of holiness, is, to minister the Holy Spirit. Has any one a passion for relieving distress? Has he a delight in mercy? Is he attracted to admire and love unknown persons, because he hears of their noble, generous and brave deeds? Is he firm to insist on justice and condemn oppression? Does he rejoice when a bad man improves, and grieve when a better man fails of goodness? Does he desire most, for himself and those whom he loves, improvement in virtue and count this to be God's best gift,—nay, esteem it to be eminently God's grace and favour? Not till any one is thus *in love* with virtue can we say that Virtue is firmly planted within him. Not until he is athirst for righteousness can we feel sure that he will be filled.

As far as we know historically, to hunger and thirst after righteousness is normally connected with a belief in a Holy and Loving God: so also is an acute sorrow for *such* sin as human law could not notice. Does any of you believe that the righteous God loveth righteousness? If then you sincerely desire to please him who is Essential Goodness, you will sincerely grieve over your own failures. This grief, which we call Penitence or Contrition, is at the basis of all highly sensitive virtue, and is almost essential to a wise and tender character. Self-satisfaction, self-righteousness, puffs up, hardens, and conduces to stagnating in our present attainments. It is related of an eminent sculptor, that after he had executed a beautiful statue which not only pleased, but satisfied him, he presently became depressed in mind; because his self-complacency revealed to him that he had reached his highest point, and he would never improve beyond.—To love God is little else, than to love the ideal of personate righteousness. He in whom truly this love is active, has a standard higher than his own present attainments. Hence he has a constant self-dissatisfaction, even when in perfect peace of conscience. In the language of Paul, "forgetting the things behind,"—that is, the virtue which he has reached, "he presses on to the things that are before," namely, to the virtue which he has *not* yet reached;—of which moreover he perhaps has no well-defined notion. One thing however he knows distinctly,—his own many failures. On account of these his soul bursts out in secret complaint to the God who surrounds him and is ever present. His hunger and thirst after righteousness draw from him spontaneous aspirations and many a self-reproof; but such sorrow is in itself blessed. It softens and enriches the soul: it purifies that temple in which the Spirit of God may dwell, and fits it for less imperfect or loftier virtue. Therefore the very fact of hungering after righteousness leads more and more to the fulness of the hungry soul.

O how lamentable are man's low thoughts and low aims! Necessarily we begin life as nothing but little animals, and our first business is to acquire strength and speed and skill of hand, or skill of various kind. All this is right and commendable. Yet let it ever be remembered by young men, that however strong they become, the bull is stronger; however swift they be, the horse is swifter. Except where the mind plays a large part, brute animals excel us in natural powers. In this form of excellence moderate attainment may suffice us.—Sensual pleasures attract a grievously large number of men, who so fret against moral prohibitions, that they might seem to wish that they were brute animals, unfettered by any law of right and honour. Not but that we may plainly tell them,—the brutes are far more self-controuled and truly temperate than they are. Such men dishonour the noble possibilities of our nature, and instead of striving to develop within themselves the image of God, they degrade themselves below the animals which know not God.—In others we may plainly see, that wealth is their great desire. A hundred small indications show, that they account him most blessed, who has most money at command. All wise men will avow, that wealth may be honourably desired; for it is a great power for good, and especially in this English world may be used actively for the very best purposes: indeed the wiser and more virtuous each is, the better can he use money. But to desire wealth for selfish gratification or pride denotes a mean and paltry state of soul. Moreover, great as is the power of wealth, the power of goodness is greater. Each human soul has in it a treasure unseen, unknown, out of which, if duly elicited, countless blessings may be derived. Each of us can make some little circle happier, if we study to do so, by gentleness and sweetness of temper, by thought for others, by small kindnesses, by checking a rash tongue, by patience and forbearance, by many small ministrations of affection. Daily life has an infinitude of small trials, out of which our virtue is to grow up into strength. Even tenderness to brute animals cherishes sweetness of heart. Let each have the principle deeply fixed within, that to do good and love goodness is the greatest bliss for man, the closest assimilation to the Divine nature. Indeed more than two thousand years ago a Greek philosopher declared, that if a man desired the highest human happiness, he must *play the immortal;* which we may perhaps interpret into our phrases, by saying, he must put on the heart of God; understanding hereby that we must cultivate his unselfish benevolence, and his entire freedom from all low passions and impulses. To strive daily after this, is to hunger and thirst after righteousness.

One who deliberately enters on this course soon learns how many holy souls have preceded him, as pilgrims seeking the same shrine, the blessed temple of God. It is a great encouragement to find that we are not alone, but are units of a goodly band and partners in the fellowship of saints. How loud and clear do Hebrew Psalmists send forth their longings after a more perfect holiness, in the love of God's holy law! "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: more to be desired are they than gold, sweeter also than the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned, and in keeping of them there is great reward. Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults." So again: "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies and seek him with the whole heart. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! Make me to go in the path of thy commandments, for therein do I delight. I will walk at liberty; for I seek thy precepts. I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved. Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance."

Dear friends, brethren and sisters, younger and elder, who come hither (I presume) for some spiritual benefit, receive kindly a word of exhortation. The grace of God that bringeth salvation can be nothing but a freeing of us from the bondage of sin and selfishness, from materialism, sensuality and every form of degrading worldliness. We are made for goodness, for righteousness, for true holiness; which alone is worthy of our high nature, and alone can yield any permanent happiness. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Young or old, resolve to be co-workers with God, which is your reasonable service. Dedicate your hearts to him, striving to conform your conduct to everything that is lovely and pure, beneficent and just. The chains of habit are so strong, that only a spiritual passion can break them, a noble enthusiasm like lightning from heaven. Let philosophers puzzle over the phenomenon as they may, certain it is, that the out-bursting of the heart in ejaculation to a holy God eminently nurtures the passion for holiness, and strengthens the weak soul. Whatever your necessary worldly pursuits, if they are lawful and innocent, they do not interfere with deliberately choosing, as your chief object of desire, that Virtue for which God has formed us. To do so, is to place yourself on his side by submitting to his wise laws, and to bring yourself into harmony with your own inmost nature. Lay aside all known sins, all known follies, whatever impedes moral and spiritual growth, especially all habits which lessen the comfort or invade the rights of others. Seek after righteousness and moral wisdom as the pearl of great price, and you shall find God in your heart. You shall walk with him by day: you shall sleep in his arms by night. Your heart shall make sweet melody of gratitude to him; and, seeking earnestly to do his will, you shall become blessed in yourselves, and a blessing to others.

MORAL THEISM.

From The "Langham Magazine."

[1876.]

A RECENT writer in one of our foremost reviews, while undertaking to refute Theism, and scornfully claiming that he has fulfilled his task, yet in the close asserts that "all the essentials of *religion* can be retained by the so-called Atheist." The *so-called!* A man who tramples on Theism is unwilling to be called an Atheist! He has to define Religion in his own way, in order to make out that an Atheist may be religious. Mr. John Stuart Mill preceded him in this, and has been followed by many; but it certainly is very unfair to go back to the derivation of a word for its sense, when for ages a well-defined meaning has been given to it, which cannot be deduced from its derivation or its earliest use in a foreign tongue. No sensible Englishman, however learned in Greek, will employ the word *sycophant* to mean one who gives information concerning figs; no one goes to the Latin derivation to determine the sense of a king's *prerogative.* It is quite true that *religio* originally meant a reflecting or reconsidering, and hence a *scruple;* whence *religious* meant "reflective and scrupulous," as a first sense; but a secondary sense, even in Latin, was coupled with a belief in Gods or God, insomuch that Cicero applies the epithet to things and buildings which are peculiarly sacred, as, "a most religious temple." Under Christianity, the words *religious*, *religion*, have been from the first used as translations of the Greek *θρῆσκος*, *θρησκία* in St. James's epistle, and universally imply reverence and devotion to a superior power; hence no one feels any contradiction if he hear a Greek pirate or Italian brigand called "very religious, but very unscrupulous." Louis XI. of France was not morally scrupulous, but he was highly devout, highly religious to the saints whom he revered. When a word has thus assumed for very many centuries in various nations a *sharply-defined* sense, it can only promote confusion and sophistry to try to alter it. We have a right to insist on retaining for "religious" the traditional sense of *devout towards some superior unseen being;* and if any one is scornful against the belief in any super-human mind, he has no right to deny that he is irreligious. He ought rather to boast that the epithet is justly applied to him. But this is said only as a protest against the sophistry of confusion; just as against the denying of Theism and yet resenting the epithet Atheist.

Christians in general have been absurdly apt to confound Deists or Theists with Atheists. One might indeed almost think that the writer just quoted mistook Voltaire, Hume, and Paine for Atheists. But it may be hoped that such attacks on Theism, and such contempt of Theists will do us the service of at length teaching Christians how vast is the chasm between us and Atheists. It is indeed high time that this matter were published clearly everywhere. When we sympathize a hundred-fold more with Swedenborgians or Evangelicals than with any who renounce the idea of a Holy God, it ought not to cause surprize that we are unwilling to be confounded with those who really, avowedly, and, as they boast, successfully, cut away the roots of devout faith, confounding indeed faith with wilfulness, and maintaining that it has no root in the soul,* but is only a prejudice retained from Christian tradition.

Against the formula, "Personal God," the main attack is directed. Many condescend to the meanness of asserting that by a personal God is understood a God who has a *body*, while well aware that even the Anglican Thirty-nine Articles open with declaring that God is Three Persons, but *without body*, parts, or passions. Others dogmatically assert that a Person can only be said of one who is limited, which is a subtle attempt to assume Atheism as an axiom. Of the same kind was Mr. J. S. Mill's calm assumption, that "of course, we can know nothing but phenomena;" well knowing that no Theist is frantic enough to say that God is a phenomenon. One might have thought nothing was plainer than the popular sense of the word Person. No one calls a dog or a horse a Person, much less an unthinking and unfeeling force, such as gravitation or cohesion. Hardly do we call an infant a Person, but only those who have Mind in the higher sense; so that to call God a Person is just equivalent to entitling him a Mind or a Spirit. Mr. Matthew Arnold, who, in his book, "Literature and Dogma," rudely flouts and banters two bishops for belief in a Personal God (as if in all Christendom and Jewdom only two bishops held this creed), shows equal aversion to the doctrine that God is a Spirit; and has the infatuation to correct the translation of the celebrated verse in John iv. into "God is an influence." This completes the proof that in denying God to be a Person, he means to deny that God is a Spirit. After this he does but contradict himself if he alledge that God is Holy, and may as well justify the Trinitarianism, at which he so remorselessly scoffs, or any other self-contradiction.

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* I am glad to add the caution that Herbert Spencer here distinctly maintains the contrary. But his position is peculiar and quite his own.

If we allow to materialists such assumptions of *philosophy* as they make, of course they easily prove Atheism. They seem resolutely blind and deaf to the assertion that we reject the first principles on which they dogmatize. Those who appear to walk in the steps of Mr. J. S. Mill (for whom, on many grounds, I have an earnest respect and esteem) prevalently assert that Experience is the only factor of knowledge, carrying it to the ridiculous extreme of forbidding us to assume the laws of arithmetic as invariable "beyond our experience." This is a cardinal subversion of the very logic by which they mean to build up Science; for its essence consists in extending to regions of which we have *no* experience the laws which we discover in regions of which we have *some* experience; and in affecting to believe that two and two may make five in some unknown world, they are blind to the fact that this is a self-contradiction everywhere and always false.

Another thing which I observe to pervade the reasonings of our Atheists is the inability to understand the source whence Theists *profess* to learn the moral qualities of God. One might imagine that they suppose (what is just the opposite of the truth), that ancient men had an immensely extended acquaintance with external Nature, and very little knowledge of the internal world of the human Mind, and evolved their belief of the qualities of God from the former alone, just as these modern materialists are attempting to do. We concede, or rather maintain, that by mere material observation you cannot discover a Divine Mind—nay, you cannot in this way discover a *Human* Mind. Anatomy will not reveal that a brain can think, nor that the brain of a man is nobler than that of an ape; but, knowing beforehand the superiority of the man to the ape, we are taught what structure and what convolutions belong to a nobler brain. It is mere waste of words and a throwing of dust into our eyes to amass argument in proof that external Nature, *treated as alone the men of material* *science choose to treat it*, does not reveal a holy and perfect God. No doubt we see without us fitnesses so marked and striking, so abundant and pervading, as forcibly to suggest Design; also mental phenomena in animals and men so peculiar as to convince us that there is Mind permanently at work in the Universe. *Deus anima brutorum*, said an older wisdom. But in speculating on the *qualities* of the Divine Mind, we reason primarily from the qualities of our own mind, *not* from external Nature. Nay, the most decisive proof of the existence of a Divine Mind with Socrates and Cicero is derived directly from contemplating the human mind itself. "Whence did you pick it up?" they ask. Mankind at large has everywhere inferred that the perishable and the temporal mind is but an offshoot of a higher and abiding Mind, which they discern as active in the Universe. If any persons are blind to this Designing Mind, and choose to be scornful and dogmatic against nearly the whole human race, it would be manlier to put their names to their writings, and not hide themselves under an anonymous mask. The real leaders, who proclaim their names and have an honourable position to maintain, do not indulge in this arrogance.

The problem of discovering or discerning that a Divine Mind exists is one thing; the problem of judging what are the qualities of that mind is another. In the former nearly all nations are agreed. In that argument the main part is played by outward observation; yet we can never dispense with self-consciousness that we ourselves partake of Mind. Of course, if we did not know this, it could not occur to us to impute mind to any one else. This is precisely a rightful reasoning from what we know directly to what we cannot know directly—in short, from experience rightly applied. But the Atheist absurdly attacks us for this very thing, saying that we are adoring our own shadow. No; but we reason from the known to the unknown—to the best of our power. We are liable to mistake in applying the method; but the method is sound, is philosophic, is the only possible method; and it is corroborated most widely by mankind, almost as widely as are the great principles of practical morals. The Greeks, hardly observing the element of Metaphysics contained in this argument, regarded the investigation of the Deity (or Theology) to be a part of Physics. So long as it is confined to Physics, it is quite evident that it can have nothing to do with Morals, and must be wholly without practical interest to human life. *Moral* Theism alone concerns us. Modern Atheists prevalently hunt down the very idea of "Metaphysics" with scorn, identifying it with groundless assumption. If we permit them to do this, again I say, we permit them to make an Axiom of Atheism.

Metaphysics play a very small part in the argument which establishes the existence of a God, but this small part is still certainly essential. Just so in the demonstrative or deductive Sciences the metaphysical part (so called) is extremely small; yet it is indispensable, generally very difficult—at least vehemently controverted. Given the definitions and Axioms of Geometry, there is no dispute among geometers as to the deductions from them; but concerning the first principles there is active controversy to this moment. All agree as to what propositions are true: the question is, How we know them? or, How we prove them? The ancients frankly assumed the first principles as true upon Intuition, *i.e.*, justified by the mind as soon as it *gazes* or dwells *upon* them: and this remains a certain fact. We moderns think we can *deduce* some of them from admitted truths, and find substitutes for others. But after all, we are driven to admit that *some* primary truths in this earliest and most demonstrative of Sciences are known only by Intuition, and the ancients felt as certain as we do about the principles—with good reason. In that very necessary science, still incomplete, called Logic, which discusses the *Laws of Evidence*, it is a trite and obvious remark that "the Laws of Proof cannot be proved;" for in the attempt to prove them you would have to *assume* the laws of proof. All that can be done is, to state them lucidly, and leave them to be approved or rejected by what is called Common Sense, *i.e. here*, the good sense of thoughtful and cultivated minds. This is evidently another appeal to Intuition. In Mechanics also, both as known to Archimedes, and also in the modern developments, notoriously we cannot evade delicate and difficult questions concerning the attainment of first principles. The reasonings or thoughts which convince us of their truth, are necessarily *different* from those which pervade the science, and are often called Metaphysical, while those of the science are Physical. The Metaphysical part, though very small, is absolutely essential —is vital; so is it in Theology. With a true instinct do those who would subvert Theology and degrade Morals dogmatize against *all* Metaphysics, the one class aiming to deny Godhead, the other to deny Free Will. They must be opposed in their first stealthy assumptions, if we are to resist them logically and consistently.

In the second problem, which discusses the qualities possessed by that God, whom we already believe unhesitatingly to exist, the Metaphysical argument quite takes the lead: that is, we argue from what we know *within ourselves* to what we are to believe concerning the Most High. Atheists constantly reproach us with this, and try to make us ashamed of this most legitimate and necessary process: then, supposing that by reproof and reproach they have annihilated the argument, they proceed to confute us as if we had reasoned from a presumed full acquaintance with the Universe as a whole, and from a comprehension of the Divine Government. They produce special cases in which they arraign that Government as *stupid* and *cruel*, and, despising our God, most naturally despise us for adoring Him. A matter very unwisely broached by the late Mr. J. S. Mill has been reiterated triumphantly as a decisive proof that if there be a God, He is a very clumsy or malicious contriver. "The pains and danger of childbirth," forsooth, are adduced as the terrible phenomenon which ought to make us all Atheists. The stress laid upon this does not indicate a sound judgment nor a strong case. Are they unaware that in certain races, as the North American Indians, mothers suffer little from this cause, and after half a day's rest, tramp about fearlessly with their young one? Civilized man, by his own errors, has made the mother's travail severer. We know that in like manner the domestic cow has often great suffering, and even danger of life, from which the wild cow is free. Moreover, on the one hand the Turkish and Greek women are reported as suffering very much less than our English women; and on the other, it is alledged in certain quarters that, by a judicious use of the bath, even among ourselves, parturition becomes perfectly safe and comparatively mild. The case is evidently one out of many in which the ignorance or folly of man has intensified human pains. It is not here asserted that in any case maternal travail can be wholly free from pain; but moderate pain may have moral results so valuable as to be even a good.

I find it difficult to read the bold, confident, and coarse attacks which are made on the physical order of things as *bad*, and, indeed, if it proceed from a God, *culpably bad*, without supposing that the writer fancies (as Alfonso the Wise, while believing the Ptolemaic system) he could have made the world more wisely if the power had been put into his hand. The arrogant folly of this is so manifest, that one may expect such an interpretation to be indignantly disowned. What then does such a writer mean? Will he say that he merely means to point out to Theists that from a Universe which has such a Mixture of Evil with Good they cannot decisively infer the perfect goodness of its Author and Regulator? Probably this is all that Mr. J. S. Mill meant. Then our reply is, that we entirely agree with him, and never drew any such decisive inference from outward facts alone. We positively and unhesitatingly infer the Divine Goodness from our consciousness of what is in our own hearts, not from an Induction based on phenomena of the external Universe, though it evidently abounds with manifold goodness. It is true that (at least, speaking for myself) I regard their estimate of the Evil in the Great World to be an extravagant and enormous exaggeration in comparison to the Good. I believe the preponderance of Good over Evil to be vast and decisive, especially if we exclude the moral world and look (as the objectors prevalently look) to the animal and vegetable kingdom. Animal pain, in brutes and men, so far as it results strictly from the conditions of our animal existence, appears to me at worst small compared to animal happiness; moreover, a liability to pain is obviously essential to life and welfare. If this be admitted (and I do not see how it can reasonably be denied) no mortal ought to regard himself as competent to argue against Divine Benignity by alledging that the *quantum* of pain in the Universe is too great. This topic, however, deserves enlargement. A recent writer, very hostile to the Theism received in Judaism and Christianity, but (I believe) not intending to argue for Atheism, tells us of the horror felt by a child whose pet bird was killed by a hawk. Having been taught that God made all the birds, the child at once indignantly declared that God must be wicked for making so cruel a bird as the hawk. The same child would probably have thought his father wicked, had he heard him give orders for the scourging of a criminal. In the latter case the moral reasons are not understood or imagined; nor in the former, half the facts. Inexperience and ignorance are of necessity sadly embarrassed in the attempt to reconcile the conduct of the wise with its limited moral notions. But as the child who believed that its father must be good, *in spite of* his scourging a fellow man, would be wiser than he who at once renounced faith in his father's goodness; so too the child who audaciously rejected the parent's teaching concerning God's goodness because of the hawk's predatory nature is ill held up as an instance of wisdom or sobriety of mind. Pain is, and ought to be, painful to us to contemplate; but surely not only is it clear that (as said above) susceptibility to pain is necessary to inculcate the avoiding of danger, but also it is highly probable that the idea of being possessed of a body which can feel pleasure and cannot feel pain is a simple contradiction, like a square circle. That if we are to be susceptible of pleasure in body or mind, we must be susceptible also of pain, is a *primâ facie* truth. Who of us pronounces his pleasures in life so small and his pain so great that he wishes he had never been born? This is, at any rate, excessively rare in the most miserable. Violent death is rightfully shocking and distressing to contemplate, but it is not necessarily distressing to the sufferer: unconsciousness may follow so swiftly on the death-stroke as almost to annihilate pain. Such is indeed the case in very many of the most appalling catastrophes. In a great conflagration the torrent of smoke or of carbonic-acid gas suffocates instantaneously. Death to those overwhelmed by a volcanic eruption, or swallowed by an actual opening of the earth, is probably quite painless. Death by drowning, there is reason to believe, brings with it only the delirium of a pleasant dream. Dr. Livingstone instructively gives us his experience of being caught in the jaws of a lion. The beast leapt on him, seized him by the shoulder, and tossed him up in air; this tossing made his brain swim as in a delicious dream, and absorbed all sense of pain. Evidently therefore, if he had been killed and eaten, death would have been painless. But his companions fired into the lion, and forced him to drop his prey. The doctor was saved, but suffered very severe pains in the healing of his wounds. The delicate skill with which rapacious animals kill their victims is wonderful. A spaniel that overtakes a leveret gives it but a single bite in the flank, and the little animal falls dead. Probably when its pulses are highly excited by running, a bite which severs an artery instantly empties the heart of blood, and at once all consciousness departs. If our improvers of Creation mean to lay down that there ought to be no violent death, we understand this argument, which at bottom demands that we should fall over precipices with impunity. As to rapacious animals, it is notoriously by their means that the balance of species is preserved. The scheme of the Creator, as known to us and as admired by Plato, is to give a superfecundity especially to the weaker, yet check their undue excess by the attack of stronger species. The timid and weak little birds keep down the grubs and worms, as they are themselves kept down by the hawks and falcons.

The same battle for life between all the trees and shrubs was announced by De Candolle as a result of the very high fecundity of plants. Now, if our Atheists take on themselves to reconstruct the world as it ought to have been, and insist that fecundity ought to be prodigiously diminished, and that no carnivorous creatures—beasts, birds, fish, insects—ought to exist, it will suffice to discuss their scheme when they present it in a shape which can be criticized. At present it is enough to insist that, accepting the Divine arrangement which ordains that life should be a struggle, and violent death a contingency, we find evidence that an end so unacceptable to the individual is most merciful when least artificial. Thus, compare an ordinary earthquake, as suffered by savages, and as suffered by civilized men, who build houses to be their tombs (to borrow a taunt of the native Americans to the Spaniards), and you find that the savage suffers little or nothing from a mere *tremblement de terre*, which yet may inflict on the others lingering agonies, when half buried in stone or brick rubbish with broken limbs. As disease is intensified in pain by human errors, so are the calamities of nature ; and this is the process whereby we are severely recalled into sounder Methods of life.

The levity with which men who found science on the belief of invariable laws flout the argument of Theists that pains and suffering resulting from those laws do not derogate from supreme benevolence, is to me wonderful. That fire should burn, but not burn *us* or our crops ; that water should drown, but not drown good men and women, are simply puerile demands. These reasoners are apt to pretend that they do not attack the Universe as an imperfect and clumsy fabric, but only attack an imaginary Being (namely, the author of it *imagined* by Theists), as clumsy and incompetent, reckless of misery or deficient in power, *if* there *were* such an author. But it is evident that they have nothing to say against our God, except by adducing against him what we call the works of God,—that is, by attacking *the world itself* as known to them equally as to us ; thus, if no Theist or Theistic arguments appeared anywhere, their invective would still rave against this world as a miserable abortion. At such attacks is it wonderful if we feel deep disapproval as well as sorrow ? To me the question occurs : If there be such a thing as blasphemy, is it not here before us ? It is not a human being that the Atheist arraigns, nor merely the imperfect ideal mentally drawn by fallible men, but the actual system of the vast world into which this pigmy mind is born.

Our Atheists seem helplessly unable to understand that the ascription of WISDOM to God always limited in the thoughtful the crude interpretation of Omnipotence. It is not necessary here to decide (if indeed man will ever be able to decide) whether matter with its forces and laws was created and established by the supreme Spirit, or had always existed side by side with him, or whether the whole is a part of his own being, which last opinion, many persons, with me, think to be the most reasonable interpretation of the facts. I venture to entitle Gravitation a Divine Force. The instant it is understood that such forces and laws are invariable (which our physical materialists of all men most positively insist), it is manifest that God *works under conditions,* without which in his works there is no room for Wisdom. A disputant quite lowers his *status* as a reasoner who pretends that an Omnipotent God *must* mean a God who can recall the past and undo what has been done. The pious whose thought is quite superficial may imagine it; but no one can do so who looks carefully into the meaning of words. It is not Milton only who flatly denies that this falls within the competence of Omnipotent God; the Roman Horace and the Greek Aristotle said the same thing; indeed, the latter said it in the words of the Comedian Agathon, who cannot have intended to utter doctrine too high and hard for the people.* I fear I shall not meet much approval in frankly saying that, because of the gross misunderstanding, I wish we could exterminate the epithet *Al*mighty. No one who declines traditional authority can pretend to any sharp philosophical proof of Almightiness. All that we have a right to say is, that *we do not* and cannot *know the limits of God's power* in matters which constitute the sphere of power. (As to making contradictory propositions simultaneously true, or a self-contradiction true, that is no sphere of power at all, and the man is puzzle-headed and ridiculous who presents such a conundrum for Divine solution.) Our dialect concerning God is necessarily inexact, largely traditional, and naturally hyperbolical, as is often the language of devotion and of love. Power of which we know no limit, and power absolutely unlimited, are easily confounded and never sharply kept apart in religious utterances. The Greeks, who on the whole had less temptation to hyperbole and in their legends wonderfully degraded their supreme God, called him παγκρατὴς or παντοκρατὴς (Almighty) quite as freely as μεγασθενης, ἐρισθενης (great in strength). We distinctly renounce the vulgar idea of crude Omnipotence, and claim that those who wish to refute us shall reason with discrimination and intelligence. If Wisdom is to receive praise, if it is to have any difficulties to struggle against, it cannot be associated with a power that is unconditional and strictly unlimited.

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* "One thing alone the might of God transcends,
Undone to make what is already done."

The majority of Theists, as indeed the majority of men, are very ill able to deal with so high a question as, What are all the limitations on Divine power cognizable to man? Some, who have struggled to reduce them to a minimum, *first* sweep away the human will as no obstacle to God's "sovereignty;" *next* (lest forsooth they fall into an "Oriental heresy" concerning the stubbornness of matter), vehemently insist that matter was created, and its properties (gravity, cohesion, &c.) imparted at a finite time. Yet even these generally shrink from asserting that Space was created, or that Time is a creature; and even Space in three dimensions is in itself a restriction on absolute omnipotence. If the Divine Fiat gave to matter its invariable qualities, of which the most important are known to us, God hereby created for himself conditions within which he had to work. Imperfections contingent on the essential laws of his Universe are not rightly accounted flaws in Creation. Perhaps under many forms and in different ages piety has discerned substantially the same explanation. The Persian may ascribe the imperfections to the stubbornness of matter; the Jew or Christian may comment on them by saying that in a great house there are vessels for honour and also for dishonour; that star differs from star in glory; that both the scales and the ranks of creatures are prodigiously varied. The Greek will rebuke his presumptuous and over-critical fellow-man by the taunt of Euripides—"You ought, it seems, to have been brought into existence on stipulations prescribed by yourself." After all, there is not much real difference in the Theistic answer to Atheists, from whatever longitude or latitude it comes.

In contending that the phenomena of the Universe show an enormous preponderance of Good over Evil, I added, "especially if we exclude the Moral world." Moral Evil needs quite a separate discussion. Obscurity is thrown over this and some other subjects by the vagueness of popular words, which theorists adopt not only in their vagueness, but sometimes even with an extension of sense making them vaguer still. Thus Aristippus and his follower Epicurus dealt with the word Pleasure. Very many of the moderns also—for instance, Pope and Bentham—have applied the word Pleasure to feelings prodigiously diverse. Thus too self-love is made out to be the only possible spring of action. But having mentioned Pope, I must add that, in spite of his objectionable use of several vague words, I cannot read his "Essay on Man," and his "Universal Prayer," without warm admiration and agreement in every substantial point. An acute friend has remarked to me that Pope's essay is all through a flat denial of Mr. J. S. Mill's essay on the same subject. But to return. *Evil* is, by most reasoners, and *Sin*, by very many Christians, employed with such immense latitude as to involve grave confusion and error. The moment we approach the subject of *Moral* Evil, two peculiarities have to be considered—first, that the word is strictly relative; for to choose the less good is to choose evil; secondly, that it is complicated with the topic of human Free Will, with which Divine *Wisdom* has to struggle. Divine *Power* might annihilate the Freedom of the Will; but if God leave our will free, he cannot simultaneously dictate how it shall act; which is, to enslave it. I am quite aware that many self-confident physical reasoners think to cut this knot by exploding Free Will as a dream. Their logic was well known, and was despised, in the whole school of Socrates. Cicero and Tacitus thoroughly understood (and we moderns claim no originality in discerning) that to deny *in toto* any freedom of the human will is fundamentally to subvert all moral ideas and all just use of moral words. If each man does only what he must do—moves only in an inevitable course—it is as absurd to call a man, as to call a planet, virtuous or vicious. It is absurd to praise him or to blame him. Against such doctrine every known language of every race protests, and so does its inevitable tendency to ruin the morals of the next generation. If children are taught that they are the creatures of mere impulse, and that self-controul is impossible, they will follow impulse with no effort at self-controul; and when "I could not help it" is a current excuse for misconduct, it justifies the retort, "Then I cannot help beating you." Law must and will become Draconically severe, when Fatalism explodes the doctrine of Self-controul.

This is a digression, but not superfluous. Moral Theism of course presupposes Morality, and therefore fundamentally involves a belief in human Free Will and capability of sinning. This essentially implies a power in the human mind to act contrary to right, contrary therefore to the Divine mind. Let those who choose lay down that a Wise and Good God may indeed create irrational beasts, but never ought to create a rational being capable of Virtue, and therefore also capable of Vice. But if any persons admit that to create the human race was consistent with glorious Godhead, they ought to see how new a problem at once arises in the government of the world. From the uncontroulled passions and perverted minds of men the most cruel sufferings both to men and beasts have arisen, and still arise; besides, mental agonies most terrible are complicated with it. From these considerations proceed to gentle, loving, and thoughtful natures the most painful doubts concerning Divine Government. The primitive expectation of piety was (and perhaps the childish claim still is), that God should interpose, and not permit human folly and tyranny to run to such awful lengths. The oppression is sometimes so peculiar and so lasting, that we can neither wonder nor censure if the sufferers, like Cassy in Mrs. Beecher Stowe's noble epic, cry out, "How can there be any God at all, when these things are permitted?" Mr. J. S. Mill somewhere wrote, that if there be a Divine rule in this world, yet at least things go on quite *as badly as if* there were no Divine Rule; and indisputable facts give great plausibility to this remark, though we cannot justify it without the enormous concession that the world could go on *at all* without a God. Nevertheless, here is the true nucleus of difficulty: that human rule, even when bad from every point of view, is allowed to endure and entail lasting evils, moral as well as physical. Ancient Hebrew Psalmists and Moralists confessed that the facts startled and vehemently distressed them. They had supposed that Divine Rule would be supernatural, and then found, like Mr. Mill, only what was natural. The pious have slowly and reluctantly learned that, no more to save a nation from misgovernment than to save a single patient from unwise physicians, does the Divine Wisdom break through any of its natural laws, but uses for its agencies only the human mind itself and the elements in which we live, so that the "carnal" (materialist) or non-religious mind easily fails to see the Divine Rule at all. History is too vast a field for any but the very few; and the explanations which a Bunsen might give, be they ever so wise, are not available to the mass of mankind; but these, at the same time, are happily without a taste of the bitterest dregs from the historical cup. Each of us, according to the extent of our knowledge, suffers inward pangs from this cause, but finds some remedy in widening knowledge, especially in the conviction that ever since the ages of convulsion, which overthrew in Europe the whole fabric of civilization and knowledge, this Western world of which we know most has steadily worked out an improvement *far more* than commensurate with the wisdom and virtue of the ostensible rulers and movers either in State or Church.

Beneath the folly of man a deeper and wiser power seems to act, and constantly to carry events onward to a nobler future. Struggle and toil are fore-ordained; but without them there were no robustness of intellect nor of virtue. So too do these difficulties as to Providential Government serve to exercise our faith—a faith which is not arbitrary wilfulness, but is based on intuition or direct perception, convincing us that the Author of man's moral nature must certainly be far *better*, as well as greater, than man; and again, that the Supreme Mind, which is many ways discerned as acting in this world, does not leave it unregulated, and must have a sublime and harmonious purpose, the knowledge of which would call forth our wondering and devout praise.

And, forsooth, we are to be abashed by being told that faith is not homesprung in our own hearts, but is come to us traditionally, and was originally a silly fetish-worship! We avow that our faith is not new, but is transmitted from age to age—moreover, is improved in the transmission. And why? Because it is criticized, and thereby purified. The very fact shows that, though traditional, it is not the less heartborn and native within us. Of course, in its origin it had plentiful imperfection, and in all these respects its history closely resembles that of Science. Is Science not traditional? If our mathematical books were annihilated, could any genius, even that of a Newton, reproduce by its own force that which thousands of young men now *so* learn as to know for themselves? Does any Atheist flout these young men by saying that they believe the doctrines only because they have received them traditionally? No one could say this but one profoundly ignorant of Mathematics. So also none could say the like of devout piety but one who is an utter stranger to devotion, one who is talking of what he does not understand. But, again, does the Atheist revile our modern chemists by declaring that their science sprung out of Alchemy, with its many ridiculous beliefs, and its mixture of magic, necromancy, and the doctrine of genii! All of that might be called "fetish," but it does not discredit modern Chemistry. Rude and ignorant man makes his first essays clumsily, whether in Art, in Science, or in Religion. We learn from our predecessors, yet we need not enslave ourselves to them; we are bound to criticize them in hope of improving on them. Thus we make knowledge *our own*, and strive to guide it into the path of science. To reproach us as followers of tradition and descendants of a Fetish creed is an imbecile attempt to rob us of the noble boast that Moral Theism is the faith towards which enlightened man everywhere tends; the faith which shall unite mankind in a blessed brotherhood, and sounds forth everywhere Glory to God and Good Will to man.

ON A FREE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

[1877.]

"God hath made us able ministers of the New Covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. . . Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."—2 Cor. iii. 6 and 17.

I READ the words of the Christian Apostle Paul with high respect, and believe them to express the general sentiment of Christians in the first age. Yet I am not about to panegyrize the first Christians in any such sense as to overlook their failings; nor could I make the writings of Paul a sacred letter without committing the very fault against which his words are a protest.

An old-established and hereditary religion may keep men's minds in bondage, and teach that submission to dogma is a virtue and an essential duty. Whether the dogmas rest on a sacred book, or on sacred officers and traditional authority, is only a secondary question. In either case, minds must have been trained from childhood to accept the book or the system as infallible, if the bondage is to be real. But a religion, which has to make its way by proselyting, cannot dispense with appealing to men's common sense and free judgment. Without this, at most, it might convert a few barbarians into the adoption of an outward ritual and submission to magical sacraments. If the preachers address men who are at all their equals in understanding, they will have to justify revolt against national priests and hereditary religion. They must be prepared to meet the imputation of turning the world upside down. Against those who cried, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," it would have availed little to reply, "Greater is Jehovah of the Hebrews" or, "Greater is Jesus of Nazareth."

The assailant who claimed of Greeks or Romans to abandon the faith of their fathers, of necessity had to give reasons and arguments appreciable to the hearers; in short, he had to persuade, not to dictate; and if he threatened, he had to point his threats against conduct which the consciences of the hearers condemned. Hence, even if we had no direct documentary proof, we might justly make sure that the first Christian teachers who met any success among the Gentiles must have reasoned with them from common ground, as equals with equals, appealing to those moral sentiments on which they were agreed, and to the general manifestation of a Divine Spirit in the visible universe. The great moral enormities which the fanciful poets of Greece, or the fantastic and perverse ingenuity of Egyptian or Babylonian priests, had brought into this or that Pagan religion, were a most obvious mark of attack for Christian preachers. So too was the lax morality and degrading vice which the conscience of the Gentiles themselves condemned. The command laid upon a Hebrew prophet served, with slight change, as a charge to a Christian apostle: "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice on high, to show my people their transgressions, and the house of Israel their sins." Outcry against conduct notoriously evil, was the necessary beginning of the effort for proselyting. "Repentance towards God" went before any exhortation to faith in a Messiah. If ascendancy could be established over the conscience of the hearer, it might avail to attract him into the new Church; but the ascendancy was to be won by exciting aspirations after a higher moral state; indeed, the chief attraction of the Church was, as a society in which those nobler aspirations would be cherished, confirmed, and in some measure satisfied. Converts who had experienced how much richer, nobler, and sounder was the moral thought of their teacher, would naturally be swayed much by his beliefs both in moral controversies and in religious doctrine; but herein they would not consciously renounce any portion of their natural freedom. Freedom is not impaired by reverence for one who is discerned to be wiser; modesty and reverence, rightly directed, build up the moral faculties and strengthen them for independent action, if only a sense of personal responsibility be firmly retained. In fact, it is in many ways clear that no absolute right of dictation was conceded to the first teachers of Christianity, nor was it possible when, as more than once happened, apostles or prophets differed among themselves. Nay, Paul appears to count upon this as ordinary when two or three prophets spoke in succession, for he says (in a passage which is somewhat obscured by the translation in our authorized version)—"Let two or three prophets speak, and *let the rest decide between them.*" Claims of authority did not settle such debates. Private Christians evidently felt themselves free to follow their own judgment. On one side of opinion undoubtedly no uncertain sound was uttered, namely, on purely moral questions, on which the Christian Church did but gather up, enunciate, and decisively enforce the best declarations of man's universal conscience. This is precisely the right place for dogma. No one who rightly understands liberty will claim liberty for such deeds as the general consent of mankind condemns.

Yet no definite code, even of morality, was set forth in a systematic sacred writing. The Spirit in the hearts of the faithful, not the letter of any authoritative document, was the arbiter. The good sense of the Church was called out to apply the general ethics of mankind, which are stereotyped in every language by every moral word suggesting praise or blame. The theoretic morals of the Church could not rise above those of the highest Gentile or Jewish teachers, unless in some exceptional error into which Greek or Persian doctrine may have fallen. In general, the outer world failed from personal weakness more than from ignorance of right; Jewish and Christian doctrine intensified noble passions and noble aspirations, and hereby added to the individual a power to fulfil known duty. Thus, while a mere heathen had to complain—"I see the better and approve it, yet I follow the worse," the Christian or devout Jew might reply, with a boast not wholly vain,—"In spite of the weakness of our flesh, the Spirit of God strengthens us to fulfil what the Gentiles justly account to be righteousness." For, to speak broadly, Cicero and Seneca held the same morality as Paul and James, so that Christians made no forfeit of free thought so far as moral duty and right were concerned.

Of course, by the necessity of the case, there was one cardinal dogma of Christianity from the very first, namely, that "Jesus was the Hebrew Messiah." One who did not accept this foundation had no pretence for calling himself a disciple. But among the Jews themselves there was great uncertainty what Messiah was to be, and naturally still greater vagueness of opinion among the Gentiles; hence we must not judge by any modern interpretations as to the freedom retained after professing discipleship. To us Paul appears, on some points, unjustly dictatorial towards the Christians of Jerusalem, but his avowals show that he did not intend this: it was a weakness of detail, and against his own principles. As soon as any one professed himself a disciple, and conformed his life to the received moral standard, Paul himself claims for him nobly the freedom of private judgment. "Who art thou that judgest the servant of another?

To his own master he standeth or falleth." James is still more emphatic in deprecating that authoritative teaching which propped itself on anathema; he utterly forbade religious teachers to employ the "earthly, sensual, and devilish policy" of religious cursing, and entitles the holy law by which he lived, "the law of liberty." Nor do we find any other theory in Peter, if we may trust the first epistle called by his name. Nay, if it be not really Peter's yet it was certainly written to pass as Peter's, which, not the less, shows to us what the church must have held to be Peter's doctrine. In this very ancient and interesting document, we find this apostle, high as he stood in the church, to write with great modesty. In addressing the elders, he calls himself merely *an elder*, and exhorts them not to assume dominion over the flock. Paul elsewhere brings out the thought more pointedly to the Christians (2 Cor. i. 24), "Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy; for by faith ye stand." Finally the apostle John, in his genuine writing, the Apocalypse, preaches the same cardinal doctrine of individual freedom within the Christian church when he makes Jesus proclaim (iii. 7) "I am he that hath the key of David, who open and no man can shut, or shut and no man can open." Accordingly, the Christian converts of the first and second age retained emphatically the sense of their freedom to think and judge, out of which flowed great earnestness of mind and great differences of opinion. James, placed as bishop in Jerusalem, in the highest seat of the Church, had exerted himself to maintain mutual respect and forbearance; but it is too evident with very imperfect success. Sects arose, attached to the doctrine of special teachers. Certain dogmas, as eminently that of resurrection, were variously interpreted. One class of teachers seems to have maintained that regeneration was resurrection, for they said that resurrection was past already, and there was no resurrection of the dead. This doctrine was extremely offensive, as we know, to Paul, who nevertheless agreed with these teachers in denying a resurrection of the *same* body which had been laid in the grave. Many other disputes were interminable, as those concerning meats and drinks, concerning holy days, concerning the Mosaic law, and the relative importance of faith and works. But when the apostles had passed from this earthly scene, a new agency gained an ever-increasing importance—that of the men called Evangelists, who appear to have undertaken to narrate orally the deeds and works of Jesus. When no apostle was at hand for appeal in controversies, the desire to know what Jesus *himself* had taught increased with the divisions and uncertainties of doctrine, so that a great premium was offered for the production of evangelical narratives, true or false. In the second century many esteemed writings were put forward by one and another as an authority to which appeal might be made by Christian disputants. The epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas, wonderful as to us it seems, were read as sacred wisdom. About one hundred and fifty years from the death of Jesus were needed, before that was built anew—which Paul elaborately aimed to destroy—*a sacred code*, dictating to, and domineering over, the Spirit and private judgment. This usurpation of authority for the *letter* (or, as we now call it, the New Testament) was earlier by three or four centuries than the usurpation by the Pope or Roman bishop. Neither Paul nor Peter, if they wrote a pious epistle as wise men, foresaw that this would be made a despotic *Scripture*. Paul's utterance is decisive and general, "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." It was not the letter of the Hebrew Church alone that was dangerous to life, but any sacred code: because liberty is essential to life, and any dictatorial decision extinguishes liberty, forbids criticism, makes independent thought not only superfluous but a sin; hence such a dictation paralyzes intellectual energies and prepares the mind for credulity and ready submission to new and audacious invention. Thus the canonizing and consecrating the writings of pious men as Divine utterance, *first* destroyed that liberty which the Spirit of God implants, *next* weakened the understanding of the Church, *finally* built up the utterly unscriptural, unchristian, sacerdotal fabric which for a thousand years held all Christendom in thraldom, and systematized unparalleled cruelties in the name of Christ and God. So emphatically true have Paul's words been, "The letter killeth." His desire was "to minister the Spirit," that is, to impart to his disciples the same power of insight and sound moral judgment as he himself possessed. This is the problem with every wise and right-minded teacher on every topic. The physician, the astronomer, the lawyer, the mathematician, if any of them accept pupils, do not dictate to them *results* which are to be accepted blindly, but endeavour to impart a power,—a rational, not a magical power: they train every pupil to understand, to judge for himself, and go forward to further independent thought or discovery. Pupils must be intelligently docile, but not blindly submissive. When they have heard and mastered the opinions and reasons of the teacher, they must at length judge for themselves. This, undoubtedly, was the principle received in that first Christian era, in which was produced whatever has chief value in Protestant estimate; nay, as I suppose, in Catholic estimate also. But Luther and the Protestants, three and a-half centuries ago, were not yet ripe to understand primitive freedom. Brought up under double bondage, submissive both to a book and to a Church, each presumed infallible, they thought they had accomplished their task in renouncing the authority of the Church; unaware that slavery to a book must soon become unendurable to those who thirsted after truth and dared not accept any man's dictation as a substitute for the action of that Spirit which giveth life. The system of quoting isolated texts, as decisive of great doctrinal questions, began very early to pervert and mar Christian theology, and after the Reformation the same error became the bane of Protestantism. It leads to sacrificing broad and valuable truth and the main scope of a writer, and magnifies into importance every eccentricity, every human weakness, every parenthesis of an argument. What Paul said of the law, we may say of the whole Bible old and new, "We know that the law is good, if it be used legitimately." This is the great problem of modern Christians, to use the Bible legitimately. Our best Puritans ran into pernicious follies by quoting Hebrew texts and precedents for religious war, for persecution, for Sabbatical observance, and for burning of witches. Vast numbers now who see this grave mischief as to the Hebrew scriptures, yet commit the very same noxious fault with the newer and even anonymous writings. It satisfies people, forsooth, that books are called Canonical! We have abundantly seen the evil of this in the deplorable and irreconcilable contrarieties with which Catholics taunt Protestant theology. Minds, enslaved to believe that the writings of pious men are infallible, set up as Divine truth every casual error incidental to a past age, and hereby obscure or suppress its noble truths. Such a process applied to Fenelon or Wesley would make their books noxious instead of profitable. Apostles in the first age did not receive *prostration* as gods, but *honour* as wise and good men with whom on occasion others might differ. Surely then, that small but free-hearted section of Christians, who in recent years have claimed to go back to the really primitive age, fruitful of new spirituality, when as yet no Christian scriptures existed, and no domination over the faith of disciples was avowed or endured, have the best right to call themselves *orthodox*, as conservators of the original principle. Moreover, one who values the precious tradition of spiritual doctrine which has come to us partly direct from Judaism, largely also through Christian channels, may certainly claim to esteem and cherish the highest *fruit* of Christianity, and to be in harmony with the noblest Christians. For is it not obvious and certain that the avowed end of Christian instruction is pure sentiment and noble life ? Are not holiness and righteousness the goal proposed ? Is not the end better than the means ? Therefore I cannot wonder that certain Christian churches embrace such men as co-religionists, even when these hold themselves entirely free from the dictation of the letter and leave to others the task of judging by what name they are most fitly called. For, as Paul well says, the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, *not meat and drink*, that is, not doubtful disputation concerning lawful food; so we may add, *neither* is it doubtful disputation concerning *historical and literary questions*, as, when and by whom and with what means of knowledge certain books were written; or, whether this or that alledged story is historically true; and numberless other topics which demand special erudition. The term *Free Christian* to many persons sounds as a contradiction; that is, they think a Christian ought *not* to be free, cannot be free, because they are quite unaccustomed to distinguish the spiritual graces and moral sentiments from the formal propositions and historical dogmas. But Paul says, " Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." The epithet *free* gives due warning, that he who adopts it sacrifices no part of that *freedom to follow truth* which God has given to Pagans, but resolves to be as free in religion as in geometry or chemistry. At the same time the title Christian avows that he values the spiritual excellencies which the highest and purest souls of Christendom have cultivated with eminent success, which also, in the earliest and most honoured of the Christian writings, are set up as of all attainments the noblest. Free Israelite, free Brahmo, free Moslem, will, as time advances, converge to the same idea as free Christian, in proportion as each section rises from the bondage of the letter into the freedom of the Spirit, from the condition of slaves into the glorious liberty of the children of God. The substantial identity of free moral thought in all cultivated nations evinces the wisdom, safety, and prudence of freedom. Man is made for righteousness and true holiness, and collectively will rise, not sink, through freedom.

When some, who have been enslaved under the letter, are suddenly set free by forces from without, they may use their liberty for the indulgence of the flesh. This is a temporary and really rare abuse. But when the vigour of the spirit from within breaks the chains of the letter, the same good sense of every nation which has ensured praise to virtue and reprobation of vice —that sound sentiment which attests that God dwells in man and rules in the universe—surely raises a community into a purer atmosphere, and teaches them that love out of a pure heart is the best state for us all. Hereby not only shall all sects of Christianity be reconciled, but hereby shall Jew and Christian be knit into one body; hereby shall all the earth learn that, as we have all one Father, we all are brethren and sisters. In a wider and deeper sense, perhaps, than the noble-hearted Paul meant, there will be neither Greek nor Jew, Barbarian or Scythian, distinguished among mankind, who are created to be one heavenly family. Yet the unity can only be through *truth*, and truth cannot be attained without research and free criticism. Keen intellects are as essential as pure hearts; incredulous and unsparing exposure of folly is indispensable for the triumph of wisdom. In proportion as in the heart God's Spirit rules and the intellect is cultivated, each man consciously needs mental freedom and feels bound to strive after truth. Under mere freedom, I dare not say that morality will *necessarily* advance: for, good or bad national institutions are a prime factor of good or bad national morals. But false religion has generally coalesced with unjust institutions, and free thought in religion is an aid even to a better political state. When to free thought is joined the aspiration after nobler moral attainment as that for which God has ordained us, the higher life is begun within us which will sooner or later culminate in sound religion,—in a diviner life, a life with God, a life in which love to man subdues our selfishness, a state of soul which delights in truth and goodness, which avoids sin as degrading and generally unjust, which rejoices in God as the ever-present source of all that is lovely, wise and true.

There are those who call themselves philosophers, and deride the faith in a righteous and wise God, because their material science does not reveal Him. Of course it does not. The soul of man is not revealed to the surgeon by the dissecting knife; do we therefore suppose that we are mere organized structures without an active and organizing mind? There is yet another class who profess to esteem religion, yet are pleased to deride every religion but their own. Let us not retaliate their scorn; but, as those who are strong, let us bear the infirmities of the weak, and acknowledge all that is sound and good in their religion, even when they glorify its weaker or baser parts. If God is on our side, what can man do to us? If we dwell in love, we dwell in God,—and we know that we are His. Fearlessly, deliberately, let us consecrate ourselves to the fulfilment of his will, which consists in the pursuit of all that is virtuous and lovely. Those who give themselves to God thereby become his saints. Millenniums back in the far East, and continuously ever since, myriads of men and women in diverse stages of knowledge have so lived to Him. Let us follow in the long train, and hand down to those who come after us the sacred torch of love out of a pure heart vowed to the service of a holy God.

INCREASED STUDY OF THE BIBLE.

[1877.]

WISE men never can be contented with their existing state. They are always keenly aware of error and defect in themselves and in things around them, precisely because they are aspiring to be better; and this often leads to discouragement. On this account, if it can be justly said that, whatever our defects, we are on the whole improving, it is valuable to treat this topic, and soberly review in contrast what is now, and what was, say, half a century ago, in order to sustain hope and brace us for exertion. Since I can remember more than half a century ago, it occurs to me to offer some remarks on the religious change of England in the 19th century. I do not mean the change in the general population, which might be too large a topic, but in students of religion. The phenomenon which here most strikes me is the remarkable fact that the Bible is now really studied. In my boyhood I almost doubt whether any genuine students of the Bible existed among the vast majority of Christians—those called orthodox. I leave others, who, having been reared as Unitarians, know from within the theological literature of Dr. Priestley and his contemporaries, to throw light on the nature of their study. I might give my own youthful estimate of Dr. Lant Carpenter, a pupil in the school of Priestley, but I prefer to be silent, and confine my remarks to the Trinitarian majority. The Evangelicals read most parts of the Bible, old and new, with vast diligence. Its very words so rested in their memory, were so blended with their sentiment, that nearly every secretary of a society who wrote a report or a circular, every missionary who wrote a letter home, interlarded the sentences with Biblical phraseology. I can say of myself that I knew large portions of the Bible by heart, not by trying to learn them, but by very frequent reading, and devout dwelling upon them; but I was not then a student of them, and this I apprehend to have been the prevalent state even of the most active-minded of the Evangelicals. The Bible served two functions—on the one hand, it gave food for religious life, to kindle sentiment and strengthen moral purpose; on the other, it was an arsenal of weapons for confuting religious error, called heresy, and for establishing a sound creed. But of that school very few imagined that learning and systematic criticism were needed for the right interpretation of the text. That every part, at least of the New Testament, was harmonious with every other part, was taken for granted; so was the "Canon," which admitted a limited and definite number of books as inspired and infallible; and in order to reconcile one writer with another, any amount of violence in interpretation was thought legitimate. The High Church always accused the Low Church of wanting erudition; but whenever the High Church took up the problem of interpretation, they presently dropped the study of the text for study of the creeds and of the articles, study of ancient commentators, or study of the Greek Fathers. Dr. Lloyd, Professor of Theology, became Bishop of Oxford about fifty years ago, and would probably have introduced into that University the cautious and sound principles of Biblical interpretation, such as we apply to all other ancient writings; but he died suddenly, and thereby left the field open to the predominance of two young men, from whose active labours the doctrines then called Puseyism arose and spread. But this school superseded study of the Bible by study of the Greek Fathers and of the Councils. Puseyism has long since culminated into Ritualism; nor can one claim any the more that study of the Bible has in that branch been cultivated. Nevertheless, one High Church Bishop, Marsh of Peterborough, an avowed and bitter enemy of those whom he called Calvinists, first introduced a fertile germ, by his translation of certain works of the German Theologian, Michaelis. Dr. Pusey himself, in his earliest utterances, spoke up boldly for the piety, as well as the learning of the Germans; but very soon after, dread of the results which might come to the Church, when, through the entrance of Dissenters into Parliament the Church could no longer trust the State, led to a rush of the clergy, and especially of the clerical youth, into Puseyism, which undertook to found the superiority of Church over Dissent on a higher pretension than Parliamentary support.

For twelve years at least Puseyism swelled onward; yet it could not forbid a simultaneous study of German learning, out of which came what is now called the Broad Church, from Bishop Thirlwall to Dean Stanley. The Unitarians were not left behind; and when Independents, Baptists and Wesleyans had all established learned colleges for their young ministers, the Bible began to be studied far more fundamentally, far more freely; indeed numbers of young theologians, who cannot quite be called unorthodox, deeply feel that without freedom the study cannot be fundamental. The Evangelical ministers inside the Church are not reared in theological seminaries, and escape theological learning in the Universities. Perhaps this is the reason why they are able to go on in their old groove by the simple process of confining their readings to the books of their own school, with perhaps a few of the more learned divines of past centuries. Nevertheless, even among them a severe check has been given to the delusive practice of quoting passages out of their contexts; and even Scotland is nurturing the resolve to buy the Truth as a pearl worth any price. Devout persons who are too busy for fundamental study, of whom I speak with respect and sympathy, will for a while shudder with distress, as hens over their ducklings that venture into the pond, at the boldness of the new students. But study of the Bible upon sound principles is begun over too wide an area and in too many schools to be arrested; and the result must certainly be an entire overthrow of what are called the Evangelical Doctrines, or the doctrines of the Reformation. A faith is now rising, which as I unhesitatingly believe, will unite all piety under foreign creeds, with all reasonable Christianity. I observe another remarkable change ever on the increase. In my youthful manhood, while I thought myself orthodox, it was a sore grief to me that piety was judged of by a man's creed, as at least the cardinal matter, and his actual religious character and sentiment was accounted quite secondary. Hence I warmly sympathized with an incipient nucleus of a Society, which did not then intend to become a sect, but aimed to promote the communion of saints among those of different churches. That little germ has, alas! produced a peculiarly narrow-minded sect, known as the Plymouth Brethren, with whom the Creed and submission to ecclesiastical rule is the *primâ facie* mark of saintship. In nearly every other church a most remarkable progress has been made in discerning that men must not be judged by an intellectual creed, but by the moral elements of character. It is becoming an axiom that God's judgment upon men can only be by the latter; insomuch that an avowed Atheist, J. Stuart Mill, has been appreciated with unexpected gentleness and discrimination by Christians of almost every class. But especially the sect which the orthodox most abhorred, the dreaded or despised sect of Unitarians, has enlarged both its mind and its heart; and, more signally than any other Christian body, proclaims that to have the spirit which we characterize as the spirit of Christ is of more importance by far than to say Lord! Lord! or to attain any accuracy of historical or metaphysical belief. By the grace of God which blesses the nineteenth century, and under teachers whom we may typify by the names of Channing and Martineau, it has added spirituality to its gentleness of judgment and its bravery for truth. It has been said: "The first shall be last and the last first;" nor is it rare for those who become proud of orthodoxy to see their crown placed upon the head of the heterodox. But here it is no marvel, that the school which first without fetters upon its belief studied ecclesiastical history and the pretensions of fixing a Canon of inspired Writ, should first raise the standard of truly Free Religion, as a direct relation between God and the soul, without any Mediator, Pope, Priest, or infallible book, between. Those who for convenience denote themselves Unitarians enlarge their thoughts and desires to embrace all devout and faithful souls as fellow religionists. Therefore I have pleasure in uniting to congratulate our friends on the inauguration of their new building, believing as I do that they will intelligently cherish whatever of devoutness, spirituality and moral wisdom the ancient Scriptures and the historical Christian church contain or have practically developed.

ON THIS AND THE OTHER WORLD.

[1878.]

THE title I have assumed for this tract may appear gigantesque: but the reader will kindly remember that no author need attempt to exhaust his subject. In fact, I do but intend to make various remarks chiefly on one writer who has devoted intense effort to the topic. The philosophers who will have no theology, except such as can be elicited by the study of that which is external to the human mind, may attain to a belief in some world-ruling Supreme Being, but in no case are likely to have even the faintest expectation of renewed existence for individual man after death. In extreme contrast to this, such Theists as were Lord Herbert of Cherbury, and, recently deceased, Theodore Parker and Mazzini, make human immortality a first principle of religion. So it is with the Bengâli Theists, members of the Brahmo Somâj; to whom I cannot allude without expressing admiration and sympathy. My friend, Miss F. P. Cobbe, an ardent admirer of Theodore Parker, is by far the most vigorous and prominent advocate of this doctrine among ourselves; which, in spite of the double-edged nature of the arguments on which she relies, deeply moves me.

In re-publishing her Essays on Life after Death, which appeared in the *Theological Review*, she has prefixed an elaborate, and, in many respects, valuable Preface, commenting on Mr. J. S. Mill's three Posthumous Essays. Perhaps it may seem needless to say, that in everything which Miss Cobbe writes, there is sure to be much that commands my interest and true sympathy; but I avow this distinctly now, because I am about to express strong dissent from her cardinal arguments and statements: and it may be well here to quote from her what I regard as a primary truth, p. iii. "We shall never obtain our truest and most reliable idea of God from the inductions which science may help us to draw from the external world. Spiritual things must be spiritually discerned, or we must be content never to discern them truly at all. In man's soul alone, so far as we may yet discover, is the moral nature of his Maker revealed," as in a mirror. . . . . . .

"If (as we must needs hold for truth), there be a moral purpose running through all the physical creation, its scope is too enormous, its intricacy too deep, the cycle of its revolution too immense, for our brief and blind observation. It must be enough for us to learn what God bids *us* to be of just and merciful and loving, and then judge what must be his justice, his mercy, his love," &c., &c.

One caution I desire here to add. Owing to essential differences of nature, we need to practise virtues which cannot exist in God. The exhortation, "to imitate him," in order that we may attain high virtue, is a precept in the Sermon on the Mount, which Miss Cobbe, with many assenting, regards as high wisdom, p. 316; but to me it seems a profound mistake, virtually reproved by my quotation from her, just made. We do not see by our outward eyes the moral virtues of the Most High. We find nothing of him outside of us *to imitate;* we only gain some knowledge of him by first knowing and feeling pure and noble impulses in ourselves. But when Miss Cobbe deduces from this precept of imitating God's indiscriminateness, "which, for eighteen centuries has rung in men's ears," that "we ought to make the same sacrifices for the vicious, as we should readily make for a beloved friend," she seems to forget that we cannot imagine the possibility of God making any sacrifices at all. At least I do not yet believe that she would seriously assert that "making sacrifices" is one of his virtues. When from an imaginary quality in Him, she deduces a superlatively high-flown and doubtful duty for us, this may warn us how dangerous is the *method* she employs. Nay, poetry may sternly warn us:—

"Must innocence and guilt
Perish alike?—Who talks of innocence?
Let them *all* perish. Heav'n will choose its own.
Why should their children live? The earthquake whelms
Its undistinguish'd thousands, making graves
Of peopled cities in its path; and this
Is heav'n's dread Justice; ay, and it is well.
Why then should *we* be tender, when the skies
Deal thus with man?"
(MRS. HEMANS' *Vespers of Palermo.*)

Surely this is as good an argument as that based upon the Rain. We cannot be wise in imitating the action of the elements. All such precepts are an *ignis fatuus.* In my belief, duty must stand on its own basis, as a purely human science, to which religious knowledge contributes absolutely nothing. Upon pre-existing morals, spiritual judgments are built. Religion cannot tell us what is moral, though it can give great force to moral aspirations. It can immensely aid us to self-restraint and sacrifice for the attainment of virtue, hereby in turn making individuals nobler, and conducing to more delicate moral perception, out of which rises an advance of moral science itself.

But I proceed to Miss Cobbe's topic, The Hopes of the Human Race,—that is, the doctrine of human immortality. The new Hindoo Theists propound it as a spiritual axiom. Apparently this was Theodore Parker's idea, who, nevertheless, also reasoned for it, if I remember, from the alledged universal yearning of mankind. The fact that all men so yearn, always appeared to me very doubtful; nay, from the history of Hebrew religious thought, a formidable objection arises: nor is any such yearning of unspiritual men to me a worthy argument. Indeed, what do they want? A life as closely like this life as possible, only *more comfortable.* How can such desires, however universal, be an omen that they will be gratified? But when it is asserted, that in proportion as men become sounder in morals, and purer in religion, so does this belief of an after-existence, in which sin shall be subjugated, and evil practically annihilated, grow up and take deep root; the assertion (if true), comes to me with great weight. It may not be decisive against objections, but I cannot make light of it; and the very possibility of an after-life, has, in my belief, a specific influence on spiritual thought and feeling.

But to Miss Cobbe mere possibilities and probabilities seem feeble: she is a bolder reasoner. To express my own judgment, I fear I must say, she is an audacious reasoner. The "existence of evil" is with her "a dread mystery," which (I am glad to say), she tries to present as an exception; yet, she only doubtfully admits Paley's assertion, that "it is a happy world after all;" and calls his solution (pp. xlii., xliii.) "an easy-going optimism." Truly, in my sentiment, the surrender of this fact (for, a fact I consider it) would inflict on Theism a most formidable wound. If there be no future life, "Man (she says), is a failure, the consummate failure of creation." On this assertion she bases the belief, that there *must be* a future life, to set right what was wrong here. Seeing that we (the few) are here happy, and that others, "no worse than we, and often far better," "drag out lives of misery and privation of all higher joy, and die, perhaps, at last, so far as their own consciousness goes, in final alienation and revolt from God and goodness," therefore, we *demand* for these [Italics in the original] "another and a better life at the hands of the Divine Justice and love: and in so far as any one loves both God and man, so far he is incapable of renouncing that demand. One who thanks God for his own joys, and is satisfied without making "demand for farther existence for himself or anybody else," she entitles "SELFISH," pp. lxiv., lxv.

Now, I try to apply this by taking the case of some singularly wicked man, whose crimes or vices bring him to a shameful death; and I ask myself, Could I approach God in prayer, with this man's name on my lips, and say: "Thou hast created him, and hast not *hitherto* shown him common justice, or common kindness; thou hast allowed him to become depraved and miserable; therefore, I *demand* of thee a renewed life for him, in which thou mayst redress thy injustices and neglects." To my feelings, such an address is the height of presumption: even a harsher word may seem appropriate. It reminds me of a much milder prayer, that of a Frenchman, opening with the words "Fear not, O my God, that I am about to reproach thee." Yet I cannot see wherein my hypothetical prayer differs from Miss Cobbe's argument, except that the one is said inwardly to one's self, the other is said inwardly to him who reads the heart. In substance they are the same. My reason, as well as my sentiment, is shocked by it; yet, she "commends it to us as the true method of solving the problem of a life after death," p. lxvii. Such an avowal is to me very revolting; and from one whose many high qualities are justly appreciated, cannot be passed over without definite protest and disavowal.

Why are we to admit that man, as we see and know him in this world, "is a failure,—the consummate failure of creation?" This is a natural idea to those who believe that the first man was perfect in virtue, and that a golden age was succeeded by ages of silver, of brass, of iron, and of clay. "Ætas parentum pejor avis," &c.! From one who not only has laid aside the fables of Gentile religions, but reads Lubbock, Darwin, and Tyndall, we might far rather expect a cheerful light-heartedness, if not a joyful exultation, that by the mysterious guidance of a hidden providence, our race is ever advancing. History is to me a book so bitter of digestion, that when consulted by aspiring ladies, I have never dared to advise their study of it, without warning them how very painful it is. Yet history brings to me an unshaken conviction that man is no failure, but a noble success,—the noblest success in the only world open to our moral sight. The men of the present day, collectively and on the average, are far superior in virtue, as well as in knowledge, to those of old.

> "Atrides! speak not falsely, when
> Rightly to speak thou knowest.
> For us, our boast it is to be
> Far better than our fathers."

Let those who tremble at crumbling creeds fancy that man is becoming viler and viler, that the ages of faith and goodness are past, and that we are ripening for a fiery deluge, as Noah's contemporaries for the flood. But from Miss Cobbe I claim a clear perception that the sway of reason is ever winning on passion and caprice; that compassion wins on selfish recklessness; forethought how crime may be hindered, wins on rude vengeance; mild rule wins on severity; woman wins on man; slavery is fast dying, serfdom is doomed; the millions obtain a consideration never before accorded to them; not only is public war less inhuman, less reckless, less permanent in its ravages, but insurgents too are less frenzied and milder in their successes; nor are foreigners so alienated as once. Man claims foreign men for brethren as never before. Superstition, bigotry, persecution are disowned, and are marvellously abated. All the civilized profess, however little they practise, equal morality to all races of men; in all the strongest communities, science and literature unite many nations. The increased brilliancy of our light discloses, alas! the blackness of our guilt as never before; but this is a necessary part of our shame, our repentance, and our purification. Our crimes and our vices, cause thousands of English hearts to weep inwardly, as if they were daily afflicted by great domestic calamity. We will not dissemble nor disparage the guilt, which is our common disgrace, and, to the right-minded, the greatest of afflictions; yet it is good to be thus afflicted, and it is a part of the agency by which our nation and all the foremost nations of the world are to be elevated; yes, and we may boldly say, this ennobling process is perpetually going on, and that, with very sensible acceleration. What more (David Hume well asks) can we wish for than the gratification of a [noble] passion? and what passion can be, in a man, more noble than the longing after a better and better future for mankind? Miss Cobbe herself expects this better future; "To judge from irresistible analogy (she says), every future generation will have a livelier sympathy with the joys and sorrows of all sentient beings, such as scarcely in their tenderest hours the most loving souls of former ages experienced" (p. xx). If human nature thus advances, why does she account man to be a consummate failure, if there be no life after death? Certainly I, for one, cannot allow that to contribute to the permanent and true welfare of the human race, of which we are organic parts, is a slight honour, an insufficient reward for a whole life of virtue; and whether from Miss Cobbe, or from anyone else, I must regard it as mischievous, delusive, and morbid, to pretend that life is a morbid dream, an empty bubble, unless it is followed by an immortality. If seventy years of life are worthless, so are seven millions. The multiplication of bubbles gives nothing but bubbles: it cannot change the quality. Life, in the instinctive belief even of the miserable, is worth having,—is intrinsically full of joy to every healthy being. At least, suicides are but a fraction of the race, and Miss Cobbe will not claim them as particularly sound-minded. To the sound-minded, life is surely precious; and if it have many pangs, of body or mind, she herself does not wish it otherwise. Every great birth comes forth with severe travail; and the less we have to grieve for personally, the greater the heartache which must be borne for others. Nevertheless, every good man joyfully accepts this, nor can it disturb his serene peace. To hold that pain is an essential part of the high-training through which God's wisdom leads mankind, will not be called by Miss Cobbe "an easy-going optimism." It has long appeared to me that Virgil, in his treatment of this whole topic, showed himself a wise philosopher,—wiser than Christians and wiser than Atheists. "Pater ipse colendi Haud facilem esse viam voluit, &c., . . ." "It was Jupiter (says he) who added evil venom to the hideous serpent, and ordered the wolves to prowl and the sea to heave; and shook down the honey from the leaves, and hid away the fire, and stopped the wine that ran abroad in rills; that use by practice might, little by little, hammer out diverse arts—." To earn bread by the sweat of the brow, was, in Virgil's belief, no curse fulminated from an angry God on the human race, but a stern necessity imposed by a wise God, counselling for our exaltation, and "forbidding his realms to become benumbed in drowsiness." Miss Cobbe, in her Intuitive Morals, emphatically proclaims that virtue is the highest human good, which also it is the grand unchanging purpose of God to promote in his human world. She evidently has not changed from this conviction. She must refuse to admit that the physical pains suffered by the human race (however inexplicable in separate instances), do at all in a broad view affect the great argument of Theism. *Moral* evil alone can, in her view, weigh against it.

Consider then the two opposite extreme cases of her moral argument quoted above. Take, first, a robber tribe—from the hills of India or from an Eastern archipelago—or take a family of Thugs. They were brought up from childhood with a very narrow moral horizon. Duty to their nearest kin or to their tribe, they understood; but truthfulness, or mercy, or justice, to any beyond their tribe, they no more dreamed of as duty, than an English sportsman thinks of truthfulness and justice to salmon or hares, or an ancient Greek or Roman to barbarians whom it was convenient to attack. Surely it is a great mistake to account men as wholly without virtue, or wholly miserable, because the circle within which their virtue is to be exercised is deplorably narrow. To deny the piety, or morality, or mental happiness of an ancient Hebrew king, because of his ferocity to Moabites or Ammonites, does not belong to a very deep philosophy. His conscience did not condemn him. The Thug had a still stranger and more perverse religion, coupling itself more visibly with avarice. He perhaps may be correctly described as having never had a chance of attaining a noble moral state, and at last dying under the English hangman, "*in alienation to God*." Yet few persons, I think, will see in the fact any proof that Thugs have a *claim* on God for a future life in order to win a nobler morality. In contrast to this, take the deplorable case of a man of high and refined genius, subtle talent, poetical gift, easy and fluent eloquence—acceptable alike to the cultivated and the rude—a man reared in the highest cultivation both of the family and of the schools (such a man was well known in my youth)—who nevertheless surrendered himself to the love of wine, beer, spirits, laudanum—in short, any narcotic; and first disgraced himself beyond recovery, becoming enamoured of the coarsest company, and before long went down into the grave, a miserable victim of his debaucheries. Will Miss Cobbe say, "God is neither just nor merciful, unless he *doom* this man to be *saved* in *another* and *a better* life?" To me the whole argument seems inadmissible; but I must leave it to the reader's judgment.

At the bottom of all seems to reside an assumption, that if God permits wrongs and "undeserved suffering" in this life, he must needs give retribution in another life. Man, she says, is bound to do justice and mercy without delay; but God, having an eternity to work in, may put it off to a distant time (p. xxxvi). In early theology, the Divine Ruler was compared to a human king, who had his throne and his court, his errand-bearers, his armies, his judges or judge, his executioners and his prison. Minos, Æacus, Rhadamanthys, according to Ægypto-Greek notions, judged the dead, as Jesus for the Christians. Retribution for the crimes of earth was of course a paramount object in such mythology. Retribution for our sins or errors we often suffer here, and therefore may suffer also in a future world; but in neither case (in my estimate) barely because God is *just.* Miss Cobbe propounds (p. cxvii.), as a solemn fact of the future, a mental purgatory of awful misery, and concludes its description by the words, "when it has been accomplished, the blessed justice of God will be vindicated" (p. cxix.) Perhaps by justice she here means nearly the same as goodness; in which case I reverently accept the thought as possible: yet I fear that the word contains with her the idea of retribution—of forensic punishment—which is notoriously the prevalent creed. "Virtue," says she (p. xxviii.), "cannot be without reward; nor can the crimes which human tribunals fail to reach *escape retribution* for ever" (so p. xli., xlii.) But the analogy from human to divine punishments breaks down entirely. Indeed, no wise law-giver punishes for retribution's sake. Though, without *past* guilt, the judge has nothing to punish (for of course he dares not to touch the innocent); yet the purpose of punishment is to prevent guilt in the *future.* If the officer of law could have prevented it in the past, and did not, he would be himself to blame. What theology will pronounce that God *was in*capable of hindering sin in the past, but *will be* capable of it in the future? or that, having been capable in the past, he neglected his duty, but he will be more attentive in the future? To put a chasm and a convulsion between his present and his future action, seems to me both morally and intellectually inadmissible. The argument that he can delay punishment, because he has an eternity to work in, is singularly weak, as if his convenience were the matter in question; but we have to consider what is equitable and beneficial to his frail creatures. Elsewhere I have used a comparison, which I venture here to reproduce, of punishments by a schoolmaster. These should be applied day by day, to keep the boys from offence. The quicker the punishment follows the offence, the more effective it is as a preventive: hereby it is kept light—

mere chidings may suffice for good discipline. But if the master were to reserve all punishment to the year's end, and meanwhile only threaten and warn, the volatile temper of children, unable to look far forward, would make his warnings vain. Impunity would overthrow all discipline, and lead on into actual crime. Then we should severely blame the master, and almost exculpate the children. Now, if we are to reason morally concerning the divine action, we cannot believe him to leave the guilty unpunished in the present world, and then to reserve severe punishments for them in the distant unknown hereafter; nay, without even public intelligible warning of a future tribunal; though, indeed, to men as frail and short-sighted as children, no such warning could be of avail. For this reason, all idea of future retribution, as such, seems to me quite untenable in the present stage of knowledge. Such a Theodice as Leibnitz made an axiom, has no plausibility. The punishment of guilt Miss Cobbe regards as entirely purifying, remedial, and beneficial. Good. But for the innocent, and for those guilty ones whose guilt is their misfortune, she intensely demands redress of wrongs. "A tortured slave, a degraded woman *must* be immortal; for God's creature could not have been made for torture and pollution" (p. 49). It would be unjust in the Creator (she alledges, p. xxxvii.) to create a being "who endured on the whole more misery than he enjoyed happiness." An infant which is born sickly, and, after lingering in undeserved pain (p. xli.), dies without enjoying life, in her estimate is injured by its Creator unless it has hereafter a balance of happiness—a dialect more like to Bentham than we might expect from her. Of course animals have never "deserved" the torments which cruel men inflict on them: must not a just God give them future redress? It is almost necessary for her, and she seems not adverse, to adopt from Bishop Butler the immortality of dead animals. I will only here say, that such a theory seems to break down with its own weight. The essence of justice (she says, p. 42) is, that "*no one* being shall suffer more than he has deserved, or undergo the penalty of another's guilt." What moral beings have "deserved" is hard to know; that we must suffer, one for and from another, is involved in the unity of our race, but not as a forensic penalty.

What perhaps shocks me most, is the instability of faith to which Miss Cobbe's logic would lead us. After much discussion, she brings out the flat avowal, as the net result (p. 48)—"Either man is immortal, or God is *not just*." The whole passage seems to glance at what I have myself written: my kind friend evidently hopes to lead me forward to her more elevated position, while, alas! she repels me. She seems quite to forget how limited is our knowledge of the possible and the impossible; and that it is by no means *certainly* beyond the sphere of external science to establish that the re-existence of an individual man, whose body has crumbled to dust, is a physical contradiction. Wherein IDENTITY consists, no one seems able to say. We know that our minds and souls were either born with our bodies; or, if with Plato we say they pre-existed, their previous existence was nothing to us. I cannot shut my eyes to the possibility of its being hereafter accepted as a physical and metaphysical certainty, that a disembodied soul of man is a monstrous idea, against nature, intrinsically absurd, and incapable of being identified with a man who has lived in organic flesh. *If* this were proved to me beyond dispute, should I then conclude (or would my friend draw the inference) therefore God is unjust? Miss Cobbe herself seems nearly convinced that memory has been scientifically proved to depend on "the brain-tablet" (pp. 74-77). What would future existence be to any of us, if it cut away all the memory of the present world? I confess, if my confidence that God is just, depended on the certainty that man is immortal, while the latter opinion is *possibly* disprovable by science, I could have no firm faith in the attributes of God at all. Miss Cobbe means to make faith in God primary, and a belief of man's immortal life secondary (p. xiii.) Most rightly; but in fact her proposed dilemma overthrows faith in God, if immortality be disproved. This I hold to be a very grave mischief. We censure those preachers who assert that all moral law rests on supernatural evidence, on miracles, on an infallible Bible, and that whoever disbelieves miracles may as well be immoral as moral. We say that such preachers lay a trap for men's feet, and prepare for them a career of profligacy so soon as they unlearn superstitions. But is not Miss Cobbe laying a net for our feet, a dilemma to cast us into black darkness of religious sentiment, if ever the progress of external science happen to prove (which, for anything which she or I know, *may* happen) that identity is absolutely irrecoverable when the vital organs are all dissolved? If this were established to-morrow, my cheerful, happy faith in God would remain undisturbed. I cannot look with terror on science, but believe that all truth is good for us. That God works under strict conditions, all thoughtful persons know, who ascribe WISDOM to him. Mr. J. S. Mill, it seems, imagined religious people to be unaware of this, and thinks to refute them, when he is saying, coarsely indeed, yet in substance the same, as they say reverently; but this merely shows how little intercourse he ever held with any high religious mind. But only the fanatical can insist that reverence for God shall depend on his doing for us things intrinsically impossible. Miss Cobbe seems anxious to possess us with an agonizing despair concerning this present world, if there be not an immortality awaiting us. She fancies that nothing but clear light or total darkness is possible: any intermediate position she calls "playing fast and loose with our beliefs in immortality" (p. xi.) But between certain knowledge that a proposition is true and certain knowledge that it is false, there must very often (and oftenest in the highest inquiries) be an intermediate state of great uncertainty; and if this be inevitable to our present condition, it must be accepted as best for us by all who revere God. Spasmodic discontent with inevitable ignorance, is a morbid state. It is not our task to govern the world. As we are not "equal to eternal cares," how can we wisely undertake to decide what conduct is *required* from the Divine Justice? It is astonishing to me that a deeply pious mind can enter on such an argument. Never did I imagine that on a religious question I should find myself on the side of Mr. J. S. Mill, and against Miss Cobbe: but so it seems now to turn out. Sadly and scornfully she rejects his declaration that the benefit of the doctrine of immortality "consists less in any specific hope than in the enlargement of the scale of the feelings." Specific hope!—I never had any, and I am convinced that very few people have; but the *intellectual conception* of a life after death I feel to be enlarging and ennobling, though incapable of being fixed. Mr. Mill, I think, does not exhort us to cultivate delusions concerning it; he only insists that immortality is not (cannot be) a proved and certain truth. That no proof has hitherto been attained available for all spiritual minds, appears to me an undeniable certainty. Not the less is it possible, that always to discuss the topic and never settle it, enlarges the human sentiment.

No argument seems to me less weighty than that favourite one, "I could not have a day's happiness, unless I believed I should meet my babe, or my husband, or my sister, in Paradise: therefore there must be a Paradise." This is certainly very deep in

Miss Cobbe, who indicates that she was brought to a belief in immortality by the death of one deeply beloved. Deep grief has its values,—grief for the loss of friends, as well as grief of other kinds: I certainly do not plead for heartlessness or apathy. But as, when a revered parent departs in very full age, grief is milder and soon fades into sweet and sacred remembrance, so too ought it surely to be with *every* loss, though for a while acuter. But to nourish perpetual grief, to refuse every consolation but a belief in immortality,—vowing to be miserable for life, if we cannot attain this conviction,—presents itself to me as emphatically morbid.

With the educated, the whole idea of God's government of the world is essentially changed, since the time that Christianity became prevalent. Jew and Christian, Manichæan and Arab, Saxon and Celt, so far as they believed in any divine government at all, supposed it to be carried on by direct intervention. Jesus himself (if we believe his biographer), announced the doctrine: "If I pray to my Father, he will presently give me more than twelve legions of angels." While this angelic theory was current, all the reasonings concerning divine rule were different from what we can now accept. At present neither of our Protestant Archbishops, nor yet Archbishop Manning, expects divine aid for the church through the swords of angels. We hold universally, that divine influence follows subtler paths for working its designs; a procedure for which there must be profound *reasons.* Some reasons we understand, but our knowledge must ever remain mutilated and very partial. If cruel and undeserved torture had been prevented, that of course would be the thing to rejoice us; that it has *not* been prevented, startles us dreadfully; but after it has been permitted, it cannot be undone. If it be an imputation on the Divine Justice, let it have what weight it may. To raise animals or men from the dead, and give them a balance of happiness as a late compensation for injustice, does not exalt my idea of the divine rule; and for man to devise this method of divine compensation for injuries, which, according to our barbarian reasoning, God *ought* to have prevented, strikes me as reasoning equally barbarian.

This leads to a matter already touched on,—the assumption that God's future rule is to differ from his past rule. If theology could be a web spun entirely out of the head and heart, we might abide by our own theories of divine rule, unmolested by material science. But in fact it is from the outer world, reasoned on by us, that the first suggestion of a World Spirit comes, and from our own spirits we reason out *some* of the attributes of that Spirit from whom is our origin. Then we are bound to check our notions by observed facts. We cannot disregard external attestations: then we discover to our dismay that the divine rule is wonderfully, nay, terribly, different from what we expected. Surely then humility should conclude: "We are somewhere in mistake: God is wiser and better than we, and our fancies were folly." How then can we add, "Because he has not done *now* what we thought he ought to do, we are quite sure he will do it *hereafter*, else he would not be just." I had fancied that only an infantine philosophy could expect God's future rule to differ from his past; that is, a different law of justice to rule in a future (or in an unseen) world, from that which exists in the seen and known world. To argue: "This present world is terribly bad, *therefore* there is an unseen world in which everything is good; or if not, then God is unjust," appears to me to be planting the germ of Atheism, and not at all to attain the wisdom, or even the humility, of modern science. I cannot consent to condemn as *bad* the only world of God which I surely know. There is evil in it which appals us, and evil against which we are bound all our lives to struggle; but it is not, therefore, simply bad, and requiring a supplementary world to be believed in, before we will praise God for the present world. To say so, is to throw contumely on all the religion of the early Hebrews. Yet with its abundant infantine errors, it originated for us that inward piety, which Miss Cobbe with me values as life; a piety, which according to her, if I rightly understand her logic, was with them groundless, because they did not believe in immortality.

But again, the future world which Christians imagine (and apparently Miss Cobbe also), is to have *no* evil in it. Whether this mean physical or moral evil, in both cases it seems to me incredible. Beings which have no bodies cannot have bodily pain; yet if we imagine a community of personalities without *wants*, none seem to have duties: something of want and possible pain appears even desirable. And if there be duties (without which we are not moral beings) finite creatures must always make partial failures and be liable to error, wrong-doing, sin; and virtue, which in a finite being cannot be divinely perfect, must always need effort, sometimes even struggle, to rise. Is it credible, that our Creator, who put us in this world for present duty, should intend us to hammer out for ourselves the image of an unrevealed world, and plant this in the front of our adoration of him, as something to be believed as firmly as his existence and goodness? I confess, nothing has made me so sympathize with the Secularists, as reading this book of Miss Cobbe. A future life which can only be conceived most dimly, hidden away in the background and reverentially contemplated as possible, acts on us profoundly, like gazing into nightly darkness, and seeing the mysterious infinite universe. It acts much on the sentiment, little on the intellect; it does not use up the mind by fruitless activity, nor has it any influence at all for evil. As for its reasonableness, even so severe a reasoner as J. S. Mill does not censure, and rather commends it. But a doctrine of immortality, thrust into the front of religion, intruded upon us as a condition without which we may not believe God to be just, distorts all proportions and perspective, and perniciously carries minds into endless argumentation hostile to tranquil serene reverence. Thereby it defeats the end which my very devout friend sincerely proposes to herself.

I more than ever doubt, whether religious thought concerning these particular matters has changed since the age of Cicero. In his dialogues are found substantially all that our materialists can now urge against a divine rule. It has often occurred to me, that the Oriental doctrine *of the stubbornness of matter* was perhaps only their mode of stating, that God works *under conditions*,—partially known to us. Side by side with Atheism or Pantheism, were men, like Cleanthes, who held to the belief of a perfect and just God. The Stoics and Marcus Aurelius or Epictetus did not need the belief of future existence (though like Socrates many of them half believed it), to maintain that virtue was the chief good, and that this remained true even to a martyr dying on the rack. If Miss Cobbe, assuming the character of a Satanic tempter, had put to Thrasea her question, "Why is it *worth while* for you to persevere in virtue, when you are in five or ten minutes to be annihilated?" he would have replied, "simply because virtue is the chief good;" and I think she would applaud.

THE
RELIGIOUS MISCHIEFS OF CREDULITY.

[1879.]

KIND FRIENDS,

AT the special request of your valued minister, I have consented to address you this morning on a definite and important topic. The pulpit in the opinion of some ought to be confined to those utterances which the ancients entitled Prophecy, while for intellectual instruction a lecture-room ought to be reserved. But in the practice of our nation a demand is made, and has always been made, for discussion in the pulpit concerning the foundation and safeguards of religion, the sources of error and the attestations of truth, as well as for exhortation and rebuke, for encouragement and grateful remonition. Accordingly, I propose this morning to consider whence arises the danger to us of slidings back into foolish and pernicious superstition, such as have hitherto ruined most historical religions.

The problem may in some conjunctures be insoluble. If a little sect, ever so enlightened, were flung into the midst of a dark world, it would in the second and third generation ordinarily be absorbed back into that world. Persecution, hereditary institutions, and strict intermarriage with none but church members, may, as in the case of the Israelite people, perpetuate the original religion without loss of purity. But we, who profess Theism, have no such separation from surrounding beliefs. If not we ourselves, yet our children, are liable to drift back into many notions which we regard to be pernicious. What has previously prevailed to distil error into immature minds will prevail again and again, if not sedulously guarded against.

No distinction between man and brute strikes me so powerfully, as the tendency of every race of men to discern with the mind beings invisible to the eye. At first indeed the tendency is, to people the very air and the heaven with spirits; but afterwards, to discover such a unity in the world-wide spiritual action, as denotes One Supreme God, whose limits in time, space and power we cannot define. Various animals familiarly known to us display all the human affections, not excluding Love, Friendship and Gratitude; nay, some of them show a sense of Duty, and of Self-Reproach when they fail of duty: yet not one of them gives the slightest indication of discerning supersensible spirit, which is the first step into what we account to be Religion.

In this fact I think a very important principle is contained. As the higher *intellect* of man alone opens to us any object of religious worship, so it is to the impartial judgments of cultivated intellect that we must appeal in the study of religious truth. Intellect reveals to us a spiritual agency in the universe of matter, and hereby a living and ruling God, eternal and supreme, therefore free from all human disturbances of soul; too great to be jealous or malignant. His grandeur assures us of his goodness; his omnipresence convinces us of his universal knowledge. Our wants, pains and tender affections show that he designed our mutual support, and that the practice of brotherly love among ourselves is our best service to him. Nor only so, but, by one step further of reflection, we infer that, as our knowledge can only be a very small part of his knowledge, so our kindness, our benevolence, is nothing but a little flame proceeding from him as from an infinite fire; whence the sacred utterance, that "God is Love." In this last step our Affections take a very important part in filling up our portrait of God; but the severest criticism and never-ceasing re-examination is needed, lest anywhere, in our inferences from the thing created to the Creator, we impute to him what in us merely indicates weakness and imperfection. Long experience in many nations abundantly warns us, how over-quick and undiscriminating are mankind, how credulous in religion pre-eminently, and how quickly their credulity depraves religious doctrine.

Our bias is vehemently towards poetical imagination, love of fancy and gossip, easy belief of reports, zeal for the marvellous, weak-minded desire, dislike of patient thought, and readiness rather to adopt the judgments of another, than to think for oneself. These tendencies have almost everywhere invented and propagated religious error, and thát, of the most noxious kind;—error which maligns God and demoralizes man. To this day Protestant Christian teachers may, on perhaps any Sunday of the year, be heard, advocating as wise philosophy the doctrine of making *the wish father to one's thought*,—a doctrine very prolific of ancient folly. Hence it is that Unitarians slip back into Anglican orthodoxy and Anglicans into Catholic sacerdotalism. Nor will a Theistic body, any the more, ever attain stability, if it undervalue the force of delusion which has hitherto a hundred times pulled down into feeble and hurtful superstition the hopeful beginnings of purer doctrine. Who of us can have any acquaintance with the New Testament on the one hand and the tenets of the Catholic Church on the other, and not marvel how the Societies which began from the religion of the New Testament were degraded into saint-worship and Popery? What influences, we at first ask, can have bridged over such an interval? History replies, that human Credulity is vast and ever springs up anew; that although Man, as distinct from Brute, discerns that which is invisible, yet prevalently he dislikes the effort. He prefers to bow before, not God, but some visible symbol of God; an image, or a prophet, or a priest: and instead of reasoning concerning morals in order to learn duty, like a child he *prefers* to have precepts dictated to him by authority. Thus he readily becomes an idolater, and surrenders his conscience to some official guidance, sometimes to a book called Canonical, sometimes to a living director.

If we search the phenomena to the bottom, assuming a noble form of religion in which God is taught to be a censor and judge of human conduct, we are forced to admit that in great masses of mankind another great cause tends to the degradation of doctrine; namely, an evil conscience, which shrinks from realizing the presence of the Most High. The desire to be religious without forsaking sin, is not at all rare, and often lies at the bottom of hero-worship, polytheistic idolatry, and saint-worship. This is so large a topic, that I allude to it timidly, lest it draw me off. Suffice it now to say, that idolatries induced by a low state of public morals do not easily shock those who have been born under them: thus in spite of a nobler remnant left in a church originally pure in doctrine, there is apt to be everywhere a gravitation downwards. Hero-worship, Prophet-worship, Saint-worship work up; and the worship of the One Holy God declines.

How necessary it is to resist the first beginnings of Hero-worship, the very notorious history of the Christian Church abundantly warns us. Mohammed knowing Christianity only by the practices of the Eastern Church, might scarcely distinguish Christians from avowed idolaters. How strangely gratuitous is the worship of the Virgin Mary, whom Moslims widely suppose to be the third person in the Christian Trinity! What facts have been transmitted concerning this Mary, whom the Church has crowned with a blaze of glory? No particle of information which can pretend to be historical has reached us, except a very few meagre notices of the four Gospels and Acts, which do not imply in her any elevation, moral or ecclesiastical; while in some passages a strong disapproval of honouring his mother is expressed by Jesus himself. Nevertheless she *was* his mother: *thât sufficed for the Church!* Fond fancy urged, that because she was his mother, she must have more influence with him than we can have: hence (as if she were mother of some Eastern Sultan) to coax her was the most hopeful way of winning her son. Such is the whole rationale of Mariolatry.

Great indeed is Credulity, and it prevails. In each successive age the single word Credulity explains all the ecclesiastical phenomena. Credulity from the very beginning of Christianity was confounded with Faith, and hereby guaranteed, that Credulity should go on conquering and to conquer. The writers of the Gospels make no claim to be inspired, yet they offer to us no means of testing their accuracy. While narrating marvels of a past age and a foreign country, the idea does not seem to have crossed them that any one should wish for some attestation. Yet this did not damage their credit with readers. The Churches first received them with reverence, and presently pronounced them to be divine writings. And why? Because, when they no longer had Apostles to lean upon, it was convenient to have authoritative books: therefore the books were accepted as infallible; therefore also ingenious violence of interpretation to twist them into harmony was thought legitimate. The same logic prevails to this day.

Judaism had been as uncritical as was Christianity. In the Jewish people the idea of criticism was not yet born,—nay, nor even in Greece,—at the time when a Jewish scribe professed to have found in the temple the book of the Law. Still, no vital harm was done to religion; for, according to the doctrine then made authoritative in Jerusalem, God was the one rightful object of worship: man was not intruded into an ambiguous deity. But Christianity involved from the first a disastrous enigma concerning the character, power, rank, and person of Messiah,—a topic on which the Jews had no authoritative tenet nor any single dominant opinion. In the dark utterances of the prophets it was not clear whether the same individual was always prefigured. If one great personage was truly intended in them all, nothing is more certain, than that when the prediction was fulfilled, and Messiah came in reality, he must know his own functions, his own *rank*, *power*, *character* and *nature*, as King or as Prophet, local or universal,—human or divine. It became therefore his FIRST AND OBVIOUS DUTY to expound this whole matter to his countrymen.

Now, how much of the Four Gospels ought to be believed, I do not know, much less do I assert; but I suppose that every Christian, and nearly every non-Christian, believes so much of their tale,—that Jesus rode into Jerusalem with popular acclamations, under circumstances carefully planned to suggest that he hereby claimed for himself, as Messiah, the throne of David; that when interrogated by the High Priest, he professed to be the Messiah; that in presence of Pilate he, either by silence or by assent, avowed himself to be the King of the Jews; also, that his fixed refusal to disown the latter title drove Pilate with great reluctance to sentence him to a cruel death, as a possible leader of insurrection against the Roman power. Yet Jesus, while so claiming to be Messiah as to make it the *test article* with his disciples, died without expounding the full meaning of the title which he assumed, but left the question as a never-failing source of evil controversy to the church, and at length of bloodshed to the world; which, if he had had any foresight, we cannot suppose he would have done.

It appears that in the wild and silly prophecy called the Book of Enoch,—which in that uncritical age actually passed as the composition of Enoch the seventh from Adam,—Messiah was represented as the Son of God and Judge of the world. Again: In the high rhetoric of the eighth chapter of the Proverbs, Wisdom is personified; hence one mystical interpretation adopted by weak minds identified Wisdom with a divine person. Further: a rhetorician, writing in Greek,—anonymously, yet so as to insinuate that he was Solomon, son of David,—carried this personification and glorification of Wisdom to a still higher pitch. The Hebrew Proverb writer had said that Wisdom was God's familiar companion and object of delight from the beginning of all things. The Grecian bursts into a stream of rhetoric which culminates in the declaration, that "Wisdom is a whiff of the power of God and a pure emanation of the glory of the All-ruling, an effulgence of eternal light, an unspotted mirror of the Divine energy and an Image of his goodness. Being one, it can do all things; staying within itself, it makes all things new; and migrating in successive generations into holy souls, it establishes them as friends of God and prophets."—Dull minds mistook this vivid and high-flying personification for sacred fact, and made out of Wisdom, as I said, a divine person; thence others proceeded to identify this personage with Messiah. Hence also the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who is reasonably conjectured to be Apollos, celebrated Jesus as "the brightness of God's glory and express image of his person,"—phrases probably suggested by this Greek book called the Wisdom of Solomon.—Another singular combination took place. Plato had diffused in Greece the saying of earlier sages, that God had created the world by System and Plan, which in Greek was called *Logos.* This phrase was propagated in Alexandria by the New Platonic School, and was accepted by learned Jews resident in Alexandria; as we know by the eminent case of Philo, an erudite man probably thirty years older than Jesus. Philo identified the *Wisdom* of Hebrew rhetoric with the *Logos* or System of the Platonists; and soon after the death of Paul of Tarsus, the Apostle John in the book of Revelations adopted the term *Logos* as characteristic of Messiah. It was quite impossible for any of the apostles to avoid setting the dignity of Messiah high above humanity, if Jesus really made the declaration that the High Priest should see him in the clouds of heaven, sitting at the right hand of God. One who was to be manifested as the Lord from heaven and as Supreme Judge over living and dead, could not be in origin and nature nothing but a mere man. So limited a view was not long maintained against the ardour of new converts, who had not known Jesus in the flesh. Most remarkable of these was that flaming spirit, Paul of Tarsus; propagator of a gospel which he claimed to be original, not imparted to him by flesh and blood: therefore, as he tells us, he at first kept aloof from the apostles, lest he be thought to have learned from them. He adopted a very obscure theory that the death of Jesus was an *atonement*, that is, a *reconciliation;* that his death took away the curse of the Mosaic law, and justified all believers; hereby bringing a forgiveness of sin and cleansing of Gentile impurity. Out of this he developed a new doctrine of "glorying in the cross," which contrasted him with the teachers who came from James. Moreover he taught that Jesus was a second Adam, and in a unique sense Son of God, who had ascended into heaven. Naturally by his ascension Jesus was elevated above all angels and powers, and was to reign to the glory of God the Father, until all enemies were subdued.

This in fact (according to Paul) was no new exaltation; for from the beginning he was the image of the invisible God and first-born of the whole creation; indeed *by* him and *for* him God created all things, and by him all things consist. A being by whose energy all worlds are held together was of necessity omnipresent: we can hardly therefore wonder that Paul practised habitual invocation and entreaty to this invisible Lord, as though he had been a god; and while undoubtedly he did not identify Jesus, whom he entitles the One Lord, with the One God his Father, who was the Supreme and only Potentate, Paul had thus set up for worship a second being, inferior to God only. John the Apostle in the Book of Revelation scarcely lagged behind Paul in zeal to exalt Jesus, whom he entitles the Lamb that was slain; the First and the Last, the Prince of the kings of the earth: nevertheless God and the Lamb are with him, evidently and always, two different beings; the Lamb being indeed a *representative* of the Most High, yet certainly not identical with God the Father. Thus the Christian creed, even before Jerusalem was destroyed, and within thirty years of the Crucifixion, stood on the very verge of idolatry, and to define it was a most arduous problem. On the obscure doctrine concerning the blood of the Lamb, which, John tells us, has washed the Church from sin, much more might here be added.

But why have I gone into these details? To point out how dangerous it is, to connect our religious sentiment at all with the glorification of a man, concerning whom so little that is historical is known, and so much that is fabulous has been invented. When the title Messiah was made by Jesus cardinal to his religion, while he left its interpretation to fantasy and guesswork, he predetermined its rapid lapse into very mischievous absurdity. His habitual tone of superhuman authority and lordly supremacy (unless the Four Gospels, and even the Three first, are false to the core) must immensely have biassed interpreters. The complacency of Jesus towards all who easily believed in him, his haughty coldness to all who questioned him, and his fierce denunciations of such as had turned a deaf ear to his discourses, made it inevitable that among Christians whoever could believe *most* concerning his greatness would seem most pious, and whoever dared to reason against new and new glorifications of him would seem impious. Criticism necessarily became identified with unbelief, perhaps with blasphemy; quickness to believe whatever was most marvellous and least credible, carried with it the aspect and credit of Faith.

So powerful is the influence of reverence instilled with the mother's milk, that highly intelligent Hindoos continue to accept, as sacred, writings and practices which to us English seem pitiable, deplorable, contemptible. It is equally natural for us, who have been educated as Christians, to be extremely slow in breaking loose from old prepossessions. Knowing personally in my own experience how difficult is the process, and how long habitual reverence and even affection will cling to that which the intellect has exploded, I expect the same slowness of change from others. The learned Christians of Germany and of England, who have laid aside first one, then another article of the ample creed, have done vast service to truth and to mankind. To complain that they have not gone on fast enough and far enough would be ungrateful, even when we are forced to go beyond them in unbelief. But a new phenomenon, eminently instructive, meets us in the case of a Hindoo, concerning whom your minister addressed you pointedly a month ago,—I mean the Hindoo Theist, Keshub Chunder Sen. He, who had cast off the superstitions of his own nation, rushes now into ecstacies of mystical honour and love towards Jesus, chiefly (according to his own account) from the impressions left on him by the Fourth Gospel; but also from admiration of many extravagant precepts of Jesus, such as few Christians ever dream of obeying, however devoutly they may read them; precepts upon which religious poverty and religious beggary were founded. I happen to have direct knowledge of the fact, that Mr. Sen, when he was in England, acted on the principle of "going forth without money and without scrip," as if in obedience to a precept of Jesus. Miss Mary Carpenter was forced to give travelling-money by stealth to his companions, who in accepting it expressed fear that Mr. Sen would be angry. Of Prudence, years ago, he wrote very disparagingly, regarding it as opposite of Faith. He has tried to divide his choicest disciples into four classes, so that one class might cultivate mystical Love, another active Service, and so on; distinctly denoting that the life of an inactive devotee would receive his applause. It cannot be doubted, that he is enamoured of precisely that part of the gospel precepts, which is wholly alien to the nobler morals of Paul and the deliberate judgment of Protestants. It does not appear that Keshub Chunder Sen has any acquaintance with the learned treatises of Europe, which establish the certainty that the composition of the Fourth Gospel belongs to a later age. He probably has not the preliminary training or scholastic erudition which would make him competent to criticize these narratives, or at all put him on a level with us, who have access to discussions on which many learned men have spent their lives. He is on a par, thus far, with wholly unlearned Englishmen: therefore in his case, (since he was *not* brought up in reverence for these documents) we see strikingly the tendency of reading them as a book of pious improvement, without due criticism.

Hereby I am strengthened in the determination, on which for many long years I have acted, never to read out any portion of the Christian narratives in a devout tone for any imaginary value in the particular passage. I do not know a single moral lesson of the slightest importance for which we are obliged to have recourse to these gospels: moreover, most of their precepts are overstrained and thereby unpractical, ill-fitted for real life. On the other hand, every line is saturated with the assumption of the superhuman wisdom and mystical greatness of Jesus, or with ascription of malice and stupidity to the mass of men around him: every page subtly infuses into the inexperienced mind the poison of credulity. When I am convinced that the narrative is everywhere untrustworthy, often slanderous and unjust, I think any thing good in the precepts is too dearly bought. To make the reading safe to young people and to those who are unused to active criticism, a perpetually hostile commentary is all but necessary; and this of course is inconsistent with any use of the book for edification. Until an idolatry has lost its foothold in the hearts not of a few individuals only, but in the heart of the age, it is wise rather to shatter the idol itself to pieces, than to leave it in mystical honour erect on its pedestal.

I am well aware how unpleasant to many English Theists is any disapproval of the conduct or precepts of Jesus, even after they have reached the conviction that he was human and therefore imperfect. Censure on Paul, on Peter, on John, they can bear with equanimity: so indeed can many Christians: but censure on Jesus pains them and seems quite *out of taste.* For myself, never did I wish to say a word against him or about him, after I had concluded that he had no place at all in my religion; but when an argument for Christianity rested on the alledged fact that Jesus is a perfect character, this drew out of me the avowal that the portrait set before me for Jesus was in my judgment far from perfect. For this utterance I was for more than twenty years treated in various quarters with much unkindness, and am still by no means free from the same. With slight change of circumstance I might have been brought into great pecuniary straits for my guarded avowal that I saw moral defects in a character presented to me as historical. One who dares to criticize it is treated as if he fought with unfair weapons, and becomes with the majority an ecclesiastical outlaw. The word *blasphemy* is whispered with horror as his sin. Indeed, from the free communications made to me, I have no doubt that numbers of persons are from mere prudence silent on this matter. Such prudence does not conduce to truth, yet we cannot expect many to speak out plainly in the present stage of national belief. If some are exposed too much those who can afford to brave odium *are the more bound to frankness of speech*. If the New Testament is ever to be read, it undoubtedly needs pointed and severe criticism, to hinder it from re-infecting the families of those who have themselves (with difficulty perhaps) overpowered the prepossessions of their nursing and schooling. The Jews here appear to have done the wise thing. Having no positive history of that age, they cannot undertake direct confutation of the gospels, regarded as a picture of their nation: yet they have an intimate conviction that the picture is so *unfair* as to be really slanderous, and they know that it has caused to them endless persecutions and bitter undeserved miseries, for eighteen hundred years. Therefore, as I have read, they forbid the book to their young people.—This does not mean permanent ignorance.—Of course, when the reasoning and critical faculties are developed, every person ought to read Christian mythology as an important part of general history. Unitarian Christians often wish they could make their teaching entirely positive and edifying; yet being a minority in a great community where traditional influences inveterately domineer, they are forced to warn their younger members of the baneful errors involved in the Incarnation, the Atonement, the doctrine of Devils, and the Eternal Hell. The same necessity presses on the Theistic teacher. Your minister did wisely, in his frank and instant disavowal of Keshub Chunder Sen's fond panegyric on Jesus. All such rhetoric is the precursor of relapse into a credulity, of which the issues cannot be Truth.

If Jesus, after leaving his own trade in order to roam as a religious mendicant, enticed other men to abandon duty to their parents and wander at his side, in order that he might always have an audience on which he could count; if he made light of filial duty in comparison with the duty of following and glorifying *him;* if he denied the duty of industry and forethought, and pronounced the rich to be accursed, the poor to be blessed;—if, while proclaiming his precepts to be superior to those of any earlier teacher, and blessing those who had the privilege of listening to him, he yet taught dictatorially much that is erroneous;—if he declared that he would in the course of that generation return, in the clouds of heaven and in sight of all men, to take possession of the throne of the world;—if he asserted that all power in heaven and earth was granted to him;—if he identified submission to himself with obedience to God;—if he declared the reception or non-reception of his ill-taught messengers to be a test of piety or impiety;—if he denounced on his simple countrymen a doom at the great day of judgment worse than that of Sodom, merely because they did not listen to his teaching;—if he emphatically taught the eternity of torture in the flames of Hell;—if he was gratified by seeing men fall prostrate before him;—if he declared the sins of a woman to be remitted, because she kissed his feet and loved him much;—if he railed against men in authority as rudely and fiercely as all the narratives represent;—if he identified Credulity with Faith;—if he deprecated examination, inquiry, and cautious suspense of the judgment;—if he haughtily repelled questions mildly and reasonably asked;—if he mistook disease for possession by a demon and believed in his own power to cast the demon out by a word;—if he taught that Faith, combined with Fasting, would enable every one to perform physical miracles;—if he used the whip against traders, who, for the convenience of the legal sacrifices and in conformity to custom and the Mosaic law, sold victims needed for the temple service;—it is certain that such a teacher, had he appeared in our days, in whatever part of Christendom, would find no acceptance among moralists or statesmen. Our bishops and clergy would not discover his moral perfection; possibly our magistrates would think it their obvious duty to treat him with severity. When such a portrait, wholly without historical attestation and *perhaps largely false*, is held up to us as that of an absolutely perfect man, and we are (not sarcastically, but in good faith) exhorted to make it our pattern;—surely it is high time to protest for common sense against Credulity. If we allow our moral judgment to be so tampered with, we may easily be carried into the most foolish and gratuitous Saint-worship.

I was grieved and a little alarmed last year, to read in the public press that a revered Brahmo, who had separated himself, first, from Hindoo idolatry, next, from the leadership of K. Ch.

Sen, practised Invocation to the spirits of deceased parents and grandparents as a part of religious worship. What Hero-worship and Saint-worship is to the State and Church, such is the Worship of Ancestors or Kinsfolk to the Family. Among the old Greeks and Romans we find the same thing; the *δαίμονες* or *Spirits* among Greeks, the *Dii Mānes* among Romans,—that is, the Spirits of Ancestors—received honour as inferior gods. Hindoo religion to this day makes much of religious ceremonies paid to the dead. That European sentiment is as prone to the same practice, as are Asiatics or as were the ancients, I make no doubt; when, in the Life and Letters of the celebrated historian, statesman, and critic, Bertholdt Niebuhr, himself informs us that in the illness of his second wife he prayed to the spirit of his first wife for aid. The eminent Dr. Thomas Arnold of Rugby gave as a reason for accepting the doctrine of Christ's divinity, that human nature *needs* for worship and trust something nearer and more like itself than the Supreme and Infinite Being. (I quote from memory, but think I give the substance of his argument.) But this is, in other words, a simple confession, that each of us has to struggle for a pure religion against the ever besetting sin of idolatry. Because human nature is *prone* to the sin, he says that human nature *needs* the practices. If once we allow Poetry and Affection to persuade us, that the spirits of deceased loved ones can be present with us and listen to us, and we habituate ourselves to their imaginary intercourse, we at once invest them in our minds with superhuman qualities,—even with a virtual omnipresence, while to their possible faculties and powers we can set no limit. The same must be said, if we make invocation to any of the heroes of history, or to a St. Becket, a St. Joseph, a St. Mary, or a St. Jesus. The argument is always specious: "We do not *adore* St. Joseph, we only *honour* him: we do not *pray* to the Virgin, we only make *entreaty* to her:" So argued a Greek bishop to me. But entreaty and affectionate intercourse addressed to departed spirits, whom we imagine to be superhuman, and to haunt us invisibly,—whose faculties and powers we cannot limit,—tend directly to supersede adoration of a Holy Supreme God. For movements of the heart in trust and love to him, we substitute trust and love to an inferior mystical being. Grant that there is a stage of barbaric intellect which cannot yet form the conception of an Infinite and Perfect God; in that stage polytheism is a movement *upwards*. But to barbarians taught by higher minds to revere one Supreme Being, no intellectual difficulty arises; and in our present stage every form of polytheism is decidedly a movement *downwards*. In particular, and above all, to introduce into religion the name of Jesus, is to ensure the renewal of endless pernicious controversies, which have made Christianity the *divider*, instead of the *uniter* of mankind, and have with frightfully literal truth fulfilled the prophecy rightly or wrongly attributed to Jesus: "Think ye that I am come to send peace upon earth? I tell you Nay, but a sword."—May God in his mercy forbid that in the future of the human race such should be the tendency of religion! Your part and mine it is, to struggle against it. It has been said, that National Liberty can only be maintained by Eternal Vigilance. Equally true is this of Simplicity in Religion; for the Fantasy which would corrupt its Simplicity, and thereby its Truth, is undying. A Religion which is to promote union and charity among mankind must above all exclude from itself historical and legendary elements; for these will inevitably generate in different regions diverse mythologies, which, even if they be in the origin mere plausible accretions, before long will eat as a canker.

ERRORS CONCERNING DEITY.

[1880.]

THE subject announced for the lecture this morning was *Errors concerning Deity*. It may seem that in no topic is error so venial, so much to be expected and calculated on, so unavoidable to every one of us. To the question, "Who can by searching find out God?" one answer alone is thought possible, and that a confessing of inability. But the same confession is needful as to complete knowledge of astronomy, of physiology, of botany—in short, of any of the natural sciences. They are all infinite. Modest we ought to be, yet modesty may be carried to a vicious extreme. It cannot be *always* wrong to reprove error concerning Deity; especially when error is peculiarly noxious. In many cases it may be quite in our power to discern that what is noxious is also erroneous. It may be wise to speak decisively against that which is clearly false, even when we have an uncertain or modest opinion as to what is *true*.

The case, I repeat, is not peculiar to religion. If there be any branch of real or fancied knowledge which we accept as a guide to action, its error may have a malignant influence. Thus, in regard to the laws of health. In these we are necessarily liable to error, and our knowledge is sure to be in many points inadequate. If opinion be perverse, it may dictate as healthful that which is uselessly cruel, or that which directly tends to unhealth. The same may be said of all moral teaching. And though Religion, as I think, steps beyond its own line if it undertake to dogmatize concerning morals, yet it generally *has* so dogmatized. Moreover, even when it does not, it generally exerts a moral influence, good or evil, a topic which it may be well to illustrate from the notions of the ancient Greeks.

The Greeks, as all scholars know familiarly, held as a national creed opinions concerning the gods alike fantastic and puerile. They depicted them as full of human weaknesses and passions, but free from moral restraints, and glorified them in this condition as beautiful and blessed. Reverential admiration was thus excited for *beauty* and *power*, apart from goodness. Base selfishness passed without censure, because it was the selfishness of a god; honour was claimed for godhead, while godhead was morally despicable. Voluptuous and impulsive natures could hardly fail to envy the lot of gods, who could indulge appetite and passion without restraint. Whatever may be said in praise of Greek mythology as elegant, it is certain that the belief in it aided to deprave that highly intelligent nation. With excellent reason did the early Christians rebel against the national creed, instilled though it was with the mother's milk and supported by public law. Xenophanes and Epicurus much earlier assailed it, with the same good reason. It was not rash, it was not an unseemly self-confidence, to say concerning the religion of Homer and Hesiod, "Whatever may be *true* concerning Divine existence, these fancies are certainly *false* and evil." The Epicureans were quite in the right thus far. Their error lay, not in their preferring virtual Atheism to the received beliefs concerning the gods, but in their defective and delusive morality.

Moslims and Christians alike, when brought into contact with Pagan religion, especially as held by half-barbarous tribes, are apt to describe it as *devil-worship*. Base credulity and base fear are seen to underlie both sentiment and practice. A god is worshipped, not because he is great, good, and just, but because he is supposed to be powerful, and dangerous. Simple-hearted American savages are said to have formulated the grounds of their worship by this motto, "We need not worship the good deities, for *they* are sure to be kind to us; but we need to propitiate the malignant deities, lest they do us harm." This frank utterance instructively brings to light the important certainty, to which multitudes of Christians are blind, that to worship Power apart from Justice and Goodness—a worship which nothing but *fear* can prompt—is really and effectively to worship a devil. This of necessity debases the heart and often hardens it.

Without mature rumination on these noxious influences, proceeding from false views of Deity, we may fail of boldness to cast off that morbid humility, which dreads the imputation of self-confidence in the renunciation of religious error. Among some highly intellectual Christian divines, the belief concerning God is noble, refined and heart-satisfying. But as, among Hindoos, Egyptians and Greeks, the learned few interpreted into spiritual truth many fables and many images, which to the vulgar mind suggested nothing but hideous and pernicious folly; so among ourselves the roots of Pagan error spread wide and strike deep; and this,—not among the unlearned only, nor merely in eccentric natures, but in whole schools of thought, permanent among us. The system of opinions which for nearly two centuries has been called *Calvinism* has been steadily dying out for perhaps half a century. But we are apt to forget that it is called Calvinism improperly and only by accident; for it was equally the doctrine of Luther; and, as the 17th article of the Anglican Thirty-Nine proves, was fundamentally admitted by the compilers of that cardinal document. The English Puritans, who merely sought to harmonize the whole Anglican theology with the doctrines of the Protestant Reformation, were strongly Calvinistic. We discern the fact clearly in the history of New England, where alone their doctrine had free scope. The same conclusion follows from its development in Scotland. I was certainly startled, a few years back, when confronted (perhaps for the first time in my life) with a thorough-going Calvinist,—an old clergyman of the Anglican Church. The moment I was in his company, he came up to me abruptly, and said: "Mr. N.! I have a question to put to you. If you were God, what would you do?" I was so taken by surprize, that I merely replied, "The hypothesis is so strange that I know not what to answer." In another moment I should have said, that I needed Divine wisdom to predict Divine action: but before I could get this out, he resumed the discourse himself, thus, "Oh, nothing is easier, the answer is on the surface. If you were God, you would *seek your own glory*." I knew too well what in his mouth this meant. God (according to him) predestined certain souls to an eternity of holy bliss, and others (the vast majority of our race) to an eternity of sin and misery, not for any merit or demerit in the one or the other party, but merely to display His *Power*, in which this whole school placed God's glory. No more thorough Paganism is imaginable. David Hume justly asserted, that the ascendancy attained by this revolting theory in the Reformed Churches was the spiritual error which stopped the spread of the Reformation on the Continent: but it is very remarkable to find it not only combined with undeniable goodness and piety, but apparently *overpowered by better influences* in the Swiss, Germans, Scottish and Anglican Reformed Theology. There is certainly a great comfort in meditating on this fact. It may make us believe that even under the basest forms of Paganism good elements were struggling with the evil—that the evil often passed off with small effect, and men improved in spite of it. The high-strung resolve to follow even through loss and suffering that which we suppose to be Duty and Truth, has an ennobling force, even when the supposed truth involves cardinal error; and while the elevating influences last, moral soundness contrives to dissipate theoretical folly into an empty cloud. But in a later stage, with a new generation, the error produces its natural fruit, when the healthy enthusiasm which counteracted it is spent. The cup of mixed elements has then been drunk to the dregs, and only its dire bitterness at last is tasted.

In quite an opposite school of Christianity an equally perverse idea of God's justice betrays itself. Here also I speak from recent experience; for an eminent person among the highest Anglican Churchmen grieved over me as a rejector of Divine truth, and took the trouble to write to me a series of letters to warn me of my very grave danger. I must be aware, argued he, that it is necessarily impossible to attain an absolute *certainty*, that I shall not find Jesus at the great day of judgment sitting on the throne as my judge; which ought to forbid my criticizing him. I replied, that by such logic neither could he be absolutely *certain* that Mohammed will not be *his* judge, nor that Jupiter never took the form of a bull or a swan, as the old Greeks taught. But such retorts fell absolutely powerless upon him. He declined to furnish me with proofs or meet my objections, because (he said) he disliked controversy. He could not be made to see, that when narratives called sacred were presented to him and to me, *he* and *I* have to judge *on the very same* level, whether they are or are not deservedly called sacred; and that as it would be folly in me to think God would be angry with *him* for not coming to my judgment, so it is equally gratuitous in him to imagine God angry with *me*. But he clung to his own point of view. Jesus does not threaten him, therefore he is in no danger. Jesus does threaten me, therefore I am in extreme danger. This, I believe, was the essential core of his argument, from first to last. Undoubtedly the writer has much in him to attract affection, as well as to command respect. So much the more does it appear to me, that he is a fair type of the prevalent High Church theory, and that his logic is its logic: namely, that when any religious teacher uses threats instead of argument, *fear* on our part ought to paralyse our intellects, and forbid criticism of his pretensions. This is indeed the theory of the Church of Rome, whose priests habitually address to Protestants the plea:—"You allow that we *may* be saved in the other world; while we are sure that you *cannot* be saved out of our Church; therefore your only *safe* way is, to join us." According to this, he who will utter loudest high swelling words, he (in short) who will curse most lustily, will prevail in every contest.

Greek Paganism never taught anything so crushing to the intellect as historical Christianity has taught, ever since the books strangely called "The New Testament" have been put together and canonized. The doctrine thenceforward current as Christian, exalted credulity into a pious and necessary virtue, and stigmatized free thought and criticism as a deadly sin; *hereby ensuring that a perpetual crop of new errors should be accepted as Divine truth*, however much they obscured and buried the original doctrine taught by Peter and James. For ten dreary centuries the tenets of the Churches became more and more debased. No Reformation took place in the Egyptian, in the Syrian, nor in the Greek Church. In the fourth great division of Christendom—the Latin Church—an enlightening began from the renewed cultivation of Latin classical literature. Cicero and Böethius, as writers on morals, and Virgil, a very pure and noble poet, became instructors of Europe in the 11th century. The influence was salutary, not as though Cicero taught nobler morals than Paul, but because his readers learned to think freely, which they never dared to do while reading from the volume esteemed sacred. Similarly, from the philosophy which was taught as that of Aristotle (propagated from the Mussulman Universities of Spain), a habit of criticizing was engendered, which sapped the fortress of blind credulity. It is to me quite astonishing that able men should impute the rebellion of Northern Europe against Papal usurpation to Luther's special doctrine of 'justification by faith alone.' It was obviously prepared by the rise of national spirit in different countries, which resented spoliation by Italian Priests; the great schism within the Papacy itself undermined popular reverence: while the cultivation of national law by laymen elicited moral criticism, which was presently directed against the lives of the clergy. The invention of printing which followed, and the introduction of ancient Greek literature, undoubtedly assisted to spread zeal for reform; but in the Greek Church itself, which had no stirring of political life, the old literature at no time exerted a reforming influence, nor did the New Testament to any appreciable extent impede the downward career of the Eastern Church in the third, fourth and fifth centuries, though no barbarism from without overwhelmed the Eastern Empire. Facts on the broadest scale of history justify the assertion that the sacerdotal depravation of Christianity, the deadly wars of religion so-called, the frightful and heartless persecution of heretics and Jews, the bloody crusades, the base and cruel superstition of witchcraft, in short, the whole mass of false and inhuman doctrines which so long was ascendant and still struggles for mastery, must be sternly charged upon the Four Gospels themselves, because of a cardinal falsehood which pervades them, namely, the belief that God is pleased with easy and childish credulity, and is unmerciful to those who do not listen, or after hearing do not believe, one who claims to be God's mouthpiece.

From the multitude of saintly men and women who in Christendom have sought after God and lived holy lives, mankind has gained a great advance. Nevertheless it is a grievous drawback, and indelible disgrace of doctrine permanently ascendant in Christian history, that it has consecrated and enthroned an error concerning Deity more disastrous to mankind than the fables of Greece or of India—more disastrous, because it entailed a withering of the moral intellect, and forbade moral free thought.

Nor is this the whole of the pernicious results chargeable upon Christianity; for Christians, with too much justice, claim that Mohammed borrowed doctrines from them. It is true that the baneful and odious imagination of Hell and demons came from the old Paganism through the Pharisees into Christianity; but Mohammed learned it neither from Pagans nor from Jews, for the doctrine with him has the *Christian* type of threatening Hell as a punishment of unbelief. This tenet is the nucleus of bloody crusades and of cruel contempt for unbelievers. Apparently it will domineer in Islâm as long as the Korân is revered. This religion is ever spreading in Africa, changing credulous and perhaps lazy Pagans, who yet are docile and often gentle, into arrogant and enterprizing Moslims—warlike, encroaching, bigoted and cruel. These are children whom Christianity has begotten beyond the Christian pale to contest the world with her. So easy is it for one to retort upon another the monstrous utterance, "Whoso believeth our creed is saved already: whoso believeth not shall be damned."

Just as the Epicureans were revolted by Greek mythology and were led to think of Religion only as a Demon hostile and hideous, scattering pestilence on mankind, so has it been in recent times with a certain part of European thinkers. It is not at all to be wondered at that a general despair and disgust of *all* religion should arise in many minds, when they discern how inveterately and successfully what has been called Religion has perverted and damaged morals. Fundamental justice to heretics has been in some countries rescued and established on a sound basis only by the successive efforts of men and schools, who have been called Rationalists or something worse. When an irreligious or non-religious party puts forward a spurious system of materialistic morals, such a system as Plato or Aristotle, Zeno, Cicero or Seneca, would treat with contempt, I cannot pretend to regard the doctrine as respectable or harmless. But when their rejection of religion is coupled with intelligent efforts for a higher morality, I see more reason to accept them as scientific co-workers than to dread them as religious opponents. Nevertheless, on the side of Religion, I must judge them to err; and to this part of my subject I now turn.

If any one chose to alledge with Epicurus and Lucretius that Nature in infinite time exhausted infinite combinations of things utterly incongruous, until by blind chance those combinations turned up which to us look like design; if further, going beyond Epicurus, he maintain that inanimate things can act in places where they are not, and by their intrinsic energy and mutual knowledge attract one another from vast distances according to delicate and fixed rules; with such a theorist I am no more disposed to argue than with a fetish worshipper or one insane. Mankind will not listen to him, and will soon forget him. But there are two classes of thinkers in these half Atheistic groups, who can neither be overlooked nor despised. They are representatives, I suppose, of the two ancient schools called by Cicero and his contemporaries the New Academy and the Stoics. The New Academy reasoned against all positive opinion concerning Divine existence and Divine action, avowing themselves satisfied with total ignorance. It would seem that they held as a secret axiom, that all religious inquiries are beyond the legitimate and sober province of human reason. To this school, I suppose, our modern *Agnostics* may be justly referred. The other class may claim Aristotle, as well as Zeno, on their side; nay and perhaps Anaxagoras also, who is said earliest to have taught in Greece that the world was created by MIND. All of these great intellects believed in a primal source of Being, who was greater than Nature and an organizer of what we call Nature. In pronouncing Him to be essential Mind, they meant the same as we mean, when we call Him a Spirit and a Person. I am here forced to advert to a vexatious controversy of words. If any one deny Mind and Design to the Creator, if any one say (what I have read from an eccentric and unhappy genius) that God created the world without designing to do so, or knowing exactly what He was about, but was led on to it by a sort of necessary instinct —I account such a one to be a believer in Blind Fate, not in God; nevertheless I understand him clearly enough, and I do not impute fraud to him. But if anyone pretends to adore the Godhead as wise and good, yet reproves us for maintaining Divine personality, he either absurdly misunderstands what we mean by a Person, or with like absurdity contradicts himself. A Person does not mean a body nor a limited form, as is most falsely pretended. We do not call a horse or a dog a Person; nay, nor an infant in arms. *Rational Mind* is the cardinal thought involved. Whether we entitle God a Spirit or a Person, is in itself quite indifferent; but we dare not renounce the word Person as applied to God, plainly because by all who understand good English we shall inevitably be supposed to renounce the doctrine that God is a Spirit, and has rational purpose in His actions. The bitter and contemptuous attacks made upon Personal Deity by some arrogant writers savour to me of despicable fraud. They do not wish plainly to avow Atheism; they cling to a sham Theism, while their pretended God has less of purpose or wisdom than a dog or a beaver. In the ancient Greek language no word existed which corresponds to our popular phrase "Person;" hence no waste of words and no game of hide-and-seek was possible concerning it. We must admit that neither Aristotle, nor after him Zeno, founder of the Stoic sect, can be claimed by us as a believer in God in the same sense as we say that Hillel and Gamaliel, James and Paul believed in God. The Greek sages certainly discerned God as a wise and provident Creator, and regarded it as a duty to man to pay *honour* to Him; but I am not aware that they avowed any fixed belief that God or the gods deign to notice our conduct or listen to our addresses. Aristotle believed moral virtue to be necessary indeed to human perfection, but impossible to God, because God (says he) has no field for its exercise; nor indeed does he appear to regard vice or crime, however deep, as in any possible sense *a sin against God*. I suppose the Stoics in general to have been of one mind with him.

So much I have said, to show due respect to this class of reasoners, as well as to discriminate sharply and expound clearly these two schools of thought, the Agnostics and the Greek Theists. Now, as to the Agnostics, who say that it is hopeless to arrive at any trustworthy judgments concerning Divine existence, I cannot but think that the nobler minds among them are unduly biassed by the bitter controversies and bigotries of religious men in the past. Do they justly weigh the important fact, that Religion has never been allowed fair play? Other Sciences and even moral controversies have been left to free discussion; but scarcely anywhere has this course been pursued towards Religion. It is taught dogmatically to us from childhood upwards. Deviation from the national creed is inculcated as the greatest of sins, which God will visit with the direst punishment; and as if this were not enough, each State in turn has employed penalties, disabilities, fines, imprisonments, and still greater cruelties, in the effort to sustain its own orthodoxy. Dethronement of princes, civil and foreign war, have been systematically practised and justified in the maintenance of creeds. One sure consequence was intense bigotry on opposite sides; another is, that many minds shrink from all efforts to hold opinions of their own. No other result could follow than what we see, even when fierce persecution is no longer possible,—namely, untractable contrasts of opinion. But if it be wise in us on that account to despair of ever learning truth in religion, it was equally wise in Socrates to despair of truth in astronomy and other physics. But, we now know, this was a weakness in him, though a venial weakness; less venial in us it is, in our present stage, to imitate his error. Those who despair of knowledge will never attain to it, and it is a shabby sort of philosophy to shrink from inquiring into a topic which has always deeply exercised the human mind, especially when proneness to discern spiritual power is apparently one characteristic discriminating man and beast. So strong is man's propensity to religious thought, that notions most superficial are apt to fascinate and dazzle him. Indeed, it may almost be held as a certain and established fact that only truth in Religion can save mankind from becoming the victims of base and evil superstition. Agnostics are effective allies of pretentious Sacerdotalism. So much is my reply here to the *know-nothing* School.

Although I fear I may have spoken at too great length, I crave a few words yet concerning Greek Theism. The eminent Greek philosophers seldom were acquainted with foreign languages, much less with foreign religious history. They were shut up nearly into little Greece itself, and had scarcely an idea of any close connection between religion and the cultivation of virtue. Religion was regarded as only an external system of public honour to the gods which it was comely and necessary for the State to dictate, loyal and patriotic in every citizen to promote in its national forms. Prayer, if offered at all, was to be offered for outward bounties of God, as for a good harvest, or healthy and handsome children, or against famine and pestilence and foreign enemies. *We*, who inherit the traditions of Jewish and Christian saints, and have experience both of the human mind and the outer world far beyond that of ancient sages—*we* claim as our privilege to pray for inward and spiritual strength to fulfil difficult duty, to bear affliction rightly, to be forbearing and kind to opponents, and acquit ourselves as soldiers of truth and righteousness; but of such prayer nothing appears in Greek literature, except a few words in the hymn of Cleanthes to Jupiter. In short, with these men, eminent as they were in moral thought, religious thought was barely in embryo. The only idea that the ascription of righteousness to God brought to the mind of Aristotle was, that the gods did not cheat one another in buying and selling—an idea which he naturally held to be ludicrous. But surely, we may reply, in creating sensitive and rational beings, God established for Himself and (so to say) *against* Himself, a duty of being equitable to those beings; so that it is no fiction to say, 'He is bound to be just.' And if it be admitted that God deliberately and with design created this world, it is unreasonable to doubt that He had good ends in view. In everyone who is wise, action implies purpose. When He gave us a nature capable of virtue, and an intelligence which pronounces that virtue is our highest and best possession, it is just to infer that God approves of virtue, and disapproves of every kind of wickedness; in short, to use Hebrew phraseology, *The Righteous Lord loveth Righteousness.* It is not philosophic wisdom, but it is an arbitrary paradox, to suppose that the Creator is careless and unconcerned, whether the work which he has set going is a success or a failure. If the Most High made us all, whatever his process, by the very fact He calls upon each of his creatures to attain the perfection of its own nature; nay, if God ordained for man Virtue as man's highest state, God cannot be indifferent and inobservant of human conduct. To imagine that to attend to us would give to the Infinite Supreme too much trouble, is a mean puerility, worthy of none but an Epicurean. We have a right to infer that where Man is God's highest work, Man's virtue is the fruit of God's work in which God most delights; and that His Spirit, which has with us joint consciousness of our inward emotions, is ever in action within us, ready to animate us to every good word and deed. To enter at all into these lofty and purifying thoughts, our religion must be, not a philosophical speculation, but a life of aspiration after higher virtue. In the spirit of the 119th Psalm of the Hebrews we must thirst after the knowledge of God's law, and desire that His wise and holy purposes may be more and more fulfilled in us. This doctrine of religion, and this only —the sympathy of God with the virtue of man—has valid connection with human conduct; and what was said to the Agnostics may be repeated here. No philosophy which does not touch the heart and quicken the conscience will subdue the fanciful and hereditary errors which have so often made a hell on earth. And, as to me appears, the doctrine that the Creator is careless and inobservant whether we fulfil or counteract the purposes of our creation, is as unplausible and as devoid of reasonable support, as it is helpless to do us good. I do not at all fear, that virtuous men and women, before whom the rich fruit of Hebrew Theism is set, will prefer the dry husks to which alone, as it seems, Greek philosophy attained. On the contrary the axiom that God is righteous and watches over our strivings to fulfil His holy purposes, will more and more be declared worthy of all acceptance.

ON PLEASURE AND JOY.

[1880.]

"Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

PLEASURE is the name which we give to the highest enjoyment of the mere animal. The world is full of pleasure, even when the follies and crimes of men import into it needless and cruel pain. By affording pleasure to gentle animals we train them to tameness, to obedience, and even to affection: naturally too, the human child, in whom the animal for years predominates, is allured and rewarded by pleasure various in kind. Pleasure bears a large part in the training of the habits, in which consists the earliest education. On this account it was impossible for those who first systematized morals to overlook its value and uses. Do not suppose that in any word which I am about to utter I shall deprecate or disparage Pleasure. Some of those who hear me are likely to be aware, that in ancient Greece one school, superficial and plausible, set up the doctrine that Pleasure not only is the chief good, but is the only good. It was even maintained that Knowledge and Virtue are good, only because they are pleasant, and so far as they are pleasant. Epicurus was not the inventor of this tenet, but he became by far the most famous teacher of it; and was made a sort of half-deified Christ by the devotion and admiration of his disciples. Though he was himself very temperate, and no vulgar man, he inevitably taught Selfishness, when he set up Pleasure, however interpreted, as our chief good and the direct object of all our effort. With most who learnt in his school, Selfishness ere long gravitated into Luxurious Indulgence, whence our English notion of an Epicure. The pious Congregationalist minister Doddridge has a fine epigram on the subject. He wrote as follows:

"Live while you live," the Epicure would say,
"And snatch the pleasures of the passing day."
"Live while you live," the sacred preacher cries,
"And give to God each moment as it flies."
Lord! in my views let both united be;
I live to pleasure, while I live to thee.

This epigram I call noble: I admire it. Yet on the one hand it may seem to concede to the Epicurean his delusive confusion of widely different senses in the word Pleasure: on the other it may aid confusion between two widely different phrases:—I live *for* pleasure, and I live *to* pleasure. Allow me a minute to show, how the two propositions here set forward exhibit and *contrast* the doctrine of Aristotle and of Epicurus.

A good man, according to Aristotle, accounts Virtuous Action the chief good, and lives for Virtue; that is, makes Virtue the chief aim of life. Yet, because Virtue has in herself natural pleasure, the virtuous man ordinarily attains great pleasure without seeking for it. While he does not live *for* pleasure, pleasure is the normal fruit of his impulses; so that in some sense he may be said to live *to* pleasure. On the contrary the Epicurean, who makes pleasure his direct aim, strictly lives FOR pleasure; and thus is purely selfish in proportion as he conforms to his creed, even when the pleasure for which he seeks is in itself refined and noble. For instance, if any one relieve the suffering of another with the definite aim of getting pleasure to himself from it, he mars an action which might have been virtuous.

Pleasures evidently, like Pains, differ prodigiously in kind, and often admit no comparison of one with another. Many pleasures are mean, some are intrinsically bad. It is hardly requisite to say to the moderately thoughtful, that each normal pleasure in its own place and time is right and good, whether the activity of the insect who dances in the sun, or the quiet of a cow chewing the cud. Nature gives to animals pleasure in the gratification of desire and in the exercise of nearly every power; but evidently one desire and one power is far nobler than another, and the nobler animal is susceptible of the nobler delight. That which a dog or horse finds in running, we account nobler than that of a cat cleaning herself; but no animal pleasure, unless it involve moral affection, can be weighed in the scale with the human pleasure of beautiful sights, of melody, of knowledge, or with the pleasure of discerning truth. That even high intellectual enjoyment is not the highest delight attainable, much less is that which conduces to the widest happiness of man, I shall presently insist. But first, let me allude to certain other pleasures, evidently human, clearly lawful and beneficial to mankind, though necessarily selfish and liable to abuse: I mean, the pleasures of having and of getting. To have a tool, a weapon, a fine garment, as one's own, is a high pleasure to infantine man: to possess a horse, a house, a garden, an estate, brings to any of us a pleasure similar in kind. To have earned some of these things by one's own toil, perhaps gives a keener zest to the possessor than to have received them from a parent. The pleasure of ownership is apparently quite selfish, yet is at once legitimate and largely conducive to human welfare; especially because in the use of property selfishness is undermined by family affection, neighbourly influence and other causes. In so far as man is a mere animal, his conscious happiness must depend on animal delights; and in so far as he is an intellectual being, his pleasures, unless he can impart them to others, are in danger of being too selfish, and hereby unsatisfying. It has been doubted whether we could persevere in seeking after knowledge, if we had no hope of communicating it; so closely akin are the desires of learning truth and of propagating it. That pleasure is heightened in proportion as it becomes less selfish, is a broad, obvious and highly important fact. The school-boy who receives a basket of delicacies from home is generally very quick to learn the pleasure of generosity. Even in the animal we observe the supreme delight which every mother takes in the welfare of her offspring: nor can we doubt from the wonderful gratitude which the dog feels for the attentions and the fond caresses of man, that they afford him far greater delight than pleasures of lower grade. Mere companionship gives, especially to the gentler animals, an obvious and very pure satisfaction; and in the most intelligent of them we discern even a pleasure in pleasing, as indeed in the pleasure of obedience, so visible in the dog and in the horse. Every animal which can be affectionate is suceptible of pleasure which may be unselfish, and therefore of a higher order. It is a great lesson for every one of us, young or old, to learn that the pleasure which comes unsought is, like unsought slumber, peculiarly sweet, and so far as it goes, is satisfying and good; but the direct quest of pleasure, to which the doctrine of Epicurus would point, is generally unsound, and often disappointing. In aiming to please, we earn the purest delight unsought, and in imparting our own enjoyments we double them. Pleasure, from being animal or physical, becomes human or moral, in proportion as it can be shared with others. The greatest of all the delights which wealth can bestow on the wealthy is found in a wise self-forgetfulness which divests wealth of selfishness;—which abounds in kind deeds, small and great, and daily earns the blessedness of giving, where gifts will be judicious and fruitful of good result. In short, Pleasure under-goes transition into a higher and nobler state, which we may call Moral, when it is reflected on him who pleases through the act of pleasing. In this sense even animal races have in maternal affection a moral pleasure, alike in kind to ours, though with them a mother's love scarcely outlasts infancy. So far is selfish pleasure from being the chief good, that even when in itself purest and best, it is lessened and damaged by being confined to self; and so far are we from always losing pleasure by an apparent renunciation of it, that in many cases the sacrifice is vastly overpaid by the higher and unsought reward which Nature and the God of Nature pour lavishly down upon virtuous action.

Only the few can be wealthy; only the few can be familiar with high knowledge and high thought; very few indeed can aspire to be discoverers of truth. The beautiful and wonderful sights of the world can hardly be visited by those who are poor or very busy: the grandest combinations of melody and harmony are ill-appreciated without an elaborate training of the ear and the taste. Nevertheless, it is not true, that the chief pleasures of this world are confined to the few who are favoured by high station and wealth; by high talents, eminent genius or special education. As the pampered appetite has less enjoyment from delicate and highly flavoured food than the hardworking man finds in his simple meals, so we shall judge wrongly, if we in any case infer superior enjoyment from the superiority of the material which affords enjoyment. A child in perfect health receives from the sight of blue sky, fresh meadows and common flowers an exquisite delight which is seldom equalled by the wealthy adult who has visited distant scenery and can gaze on a tropical hothouse. Street music may give as keen enjoyment to the one, as the symphonies of refined art to the other. Nor only so, but after we have exhausted all the praise that can be uttered, and uttered truly, on the pleasures of the intellect and of the refined senses, a just award will avow, that the pleasure which is strictly social and properly moral,—that which springs from the action of Affection or Benevolence,—is not only the most widely diffused, but is really the most intense, the most permanent and the most exalting to the character. The generosity of the widow's mite is become proverbial. The ennobling force of a generous action depends less on the absolute greatness of the gift, than on the enlargement of heart which it denotes and exercises in the giver. There may be magnificence in a child's gift.* Day by day, in the mass of our hard-working people, there is a lavish self-devotion, not only between husband and wife, parent and child, or in sisters and aunts, but even beyond the lines of kinsfolk; a self-devotion especially elicited by a divine pity for suffering. In this matter of pleasure there is a sort of ladder that ascends to heaven. To seek and to enjoy pleasure belongs to us all as animals: this, though legitimate even when selfish, belongs to the lower nature. The pleasure of gratitude, even in the animal, is moral; as when a dog loves a man far beyond the measure which the man's actions deserve,—loves, because he attributes those actions to friendship. Gratitude, in honouring the affection which gave, more than the mere thing which was given, is akin to the Virtue which rejoices in another's Virtue; hereby it seems to earn a higher name than Pleasure, namely Joy. Perhaps we may distinguish the two thus:—Pleasure springs from the satisfaction of natural wants and animal appetites, from getting rid of pain and discomfort, from the exertion of power or the gratification of impulse wholly selfish; but Joy comes from the gratification of some higher passion, which is at least unselfish, if not always wise and commendable. Pleasure may be selfish, may be animal, may be low and contemptible, may be high and refined; but pure Joy is chiefly elicited by affection, by benevolence, or by sympathy with goodness, as in the triumph of right over oppression, or the conquest of a soul over baser tendencies. The development of Joy from such sources is not only the noblest human gratification, but seems eminently to be that which we must ascribe to the Supreme Goodness.

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* [The words are Aristotle's,—Nicomædean Ethics.]

Nevertheless,—just as in the infantine stage of the individual the germ of every manly excellence is wrapt up, so in the lowest stages of human nature partial virtue exists in much intensity, with Joy as its natural fruit. The virtue of the barbarian is unequable, and often mixed with dark passion which shocks us; yet the principles of his moral nature differ not from ours. The difference generally turns on a perpetual state of border war. Indeed, even the foremost nations of Christendom rapidly sink into barbarian morals, if war be prolonged and spread over a wide fraction of the people. Callousness to the sufferings and rights of animals does not annihilate all high virtue in Englishmen or Frenchmen: nor does callousness to the sufferings of foreign enemies annihilate high virtue in savage tribes. Affection within the *family* is with them generally intense: self-sacrifice for the *community* is often complete and admirable. An ideal wholly unselfish often pervades them more widely than is usual in a peaceful community, busied chiefly in its family cares, and personal ambitions; and out of self-devotion to an ideal arises the capacity for heroic Joy. Family affection is beautiful. Patriotic self-sacrifice is grand. The ancient Roman who virtually made Rome a goddess, and was ready to become a martyr in her cause, hereby earned a noble joy in her successes. The same may be said of this or that French soldier, perhaps illiterate and superstitious. Such was he, who in the agony of his death-wound before Sebastopol avowed his supreme joy that his beloved France was victorious over the Malakoff. Human society, in short, is so organized even in its earliest state, that unselfish ideals shall be held up and attract the heart. The area of Family Affection is too narrow, too closely allied to personal comfort, to be sufficiently antagonistic to selfishness. But as effort for welfare is widened from the family to the local community, so from this it spreads to the county and to the nation; and at each step of enlargement Self sinks lower, and a grander Ideal succeeds. Justice to the Foreigner is a still purer aspiration, corrective of a perverse patriotism; while Justice to all God's creatures, and Benevolence to all harmless animals, rebuke the conceited idea, that Man alone in this world is of any concern to God. So much has been said, to make clear, that however much a pure and rational code of Morals and a life ordered in accordance with it tend to that noblest form of pleasure which we rather entitle Joy; still it is no exclusive possession of higher culture, fuller knowledge, nor even of consistent virtue. There may indeed be a wild and frightful Joy of Revenge and Hatred. In short, wherever and however selfish desire is superseded and outgrown by unselfish aspiration, in so far presently grows up a susceptibility of the Joy which belongs to our higher nature.

In Judaism the patriotic principle was consecrated by the national religion. The ideal Zion became a purer object of veneration, in proportion to the misfortunes which overwhelmed the monotheistic people. In the reigns of a few prosperous monarchs, who were warlike and aggressive, there is nothing to denote that Hebrew zeal for the prosperity of Zion and the aggrandizement of Israel was a more laudable principle than Roman zeal for success to Roman arms. But when the little realm was enormously out-matched in the shock with great empires,—Assyria, Babylon, the Antiochi, the Romans,—all idea of vulgar aggrandizement was abandoned. The national law was loved and glorified for its superior moral excellence and religious truth; only on account of that superiority was the proselyting of foreigners desired and prophesied. Nothing more was hoped from weapons of war, than barely to sustain the national worship upon its own area. Any further honour and glory to Jerusalem and its Temple was anticipated solely from the favour and blessing of a holy God on just and pious institutions. Towards foreigners indeed the eccentric and arbitrary ceremonies called Levitical were unpropitious; for they gave so much advantage at all times to the more narrow-minded of Jewish teachers, that the large-hearted and philanthropic side of the law was with difficulty kept in predominance. Nevertheless, the patriotism of Jews after the Babylonian era was the noblest national influence known to us in antiquity, and deserves to be mentioned with far higher respect than is unhappily traditional with our historians. The triumphant Joy so rapturously expressed in the sublime strains of prophecy appended* to our Isaiah thrilled from heart to heart through the whole nation for centuries;—an honourable, noble, heart-filling joy, which both elevated and strengthened those through whom it breathed; though alas! it fostered high expectations of national glory which deluded them. When Judaism was preached to the Gentiles, as it certainly sometimes was, without its ceremonies, a happy beginning seemed to be made of a fruitful career. But Christianity, on entering the same field as a rival, diffused a new medium of vision, through which the zeal to establish Truth and Justice on earth was absorbed in anxiety to rescue an Elect Remnant from the Wrath to come. After a very short interval Roman violence had crushed Judaism everywhere, so that Christianity was left alone to execute the task of enlightening the world: — disembarrassed indeed of the clog of Jewish ceremonies, but entangled in a new and complex mysticism. Nevertheless, through the haze of legend glorious principles shone out, fruitful of all goodness. Such was the announcement, well known to Hebrew Psalmists,—that GOD is LOVE. Compassion for the miserable soon became a cardinal influence, perhaps a motive power, to Christianity. The belief was early current that the great business of life with Jesus himself had been to rescue the wretched, to succour the weak and to do good. Christian fantasy depicted him with miraculous power to heal sickness; a power in which if any sick man in Judea had faith, the recovery of such a one during the lifetime of Jesus had been easy. It was even taught, that every disciple who had faith was able to outshine the Master in these miraculous deeds: but good sense largely kept down such ambition, and simply riveted itself on the idea, that of all action the most Divine is, *to do good*, and for this object we ought all to live. Individuals could not indeed change institutions, could not remedy public injustice, could not redress the wrongs of classes and nations: but in that first age of Christianity, which produced the documents thenceforward held as sacred, Christ himself was expected soon to come down from heaven for the overthrow of Pagan thrones, and to take the government of the whole world into his own hands. Hence it was enough for Christians to devote themselves to the relief of suffering in detail, without trying to investigate and remove its deep-seated causes. Among the real saints of those early days two passions became dominant, each wholly unselfish,—the passion of proselyting others to Christianity, and the passion of relieving the distressed. It must be confessed; this noble movement was soon blighted by a double strife,—namely, by dissensions concerning the limits of Messianic dignity, and by ambition to aggrandize the Church. Hereby the history of Christendom became mixed of elements prodigiously diverse. Yet the new and sinister passions of the controversy were awhile unselfish. Erring Zeal had its Agony or its Joy, and maintained (in theory at least) the supremacy of the soul over the body. And even when fanaticism became fiercer, and struggle more selfish, yet through the clouds of ever-increasing folly bright gleams of fruitful truth did not fail to flash;—such as, the Goodness of God, the equality of all nations in his sight, the privilege of being *Servants* for good, the divine quality of Compassion, and other maxims scarcely known or never widely spread among the educated classes of older time. When after a millennium of confusion civil freedom began to win upon tyranny, and infantine free thought made inroads on mythology, the glorious coming future of Europe dawned in the midst of war and struggle.

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* I refer especially to the chapters numbered as liv., lx., lxi., lxii.

We are very slow to learn the supremacy of affection over intellect, of gentleness, love and humility over ambition and stern pride: yet these truths are the jewels enshrined in an inner casket of the proud and persecuting mythological church. Despite of errors which Paul would have called old women's fables, despite of Paul's own wild visions and perverse logic, despite of anathemas, excommunications, crusades, wars and the horrible Inquisition, despite of Augustinian and Calvinistic error, magical sacraments and other pretences of sacerdotalism;—the still small voice has continued to thrill through men's hearts, insisting that man's best service to God is to revere and cherish God's workmanship, by self-restraint for others' benefit, and by every form of mercy and kindness. Philanthropy, in its modern sense, was scarcely imagined by antiquity. It is true, that before John Howard's wonderful career. Sisters of Mercy had made the idea of Philanthropy visible; but it was narrowed by ecclesiastical trammels, and seems to have been blurred by a prevalent hope of such Sisters to *earn* by it their salvation from *Purgatory*. Be this as it may, we now see the happy spectacle, that all sincere unpretending philanthropy receives honour from high and low, and even from mercantile companies. Of religious mendicants we no longer approve, and only the few can make the welfare of others the unpaid business of their lives. But the universal reverence for a life, which, while devoted to the welfare of others, seeks nothing for itself, reveals a critical change in world-wide convictions. Ecclesiasticism has had its day. For Bloody Conquest the future has no honours in reserve: and even now each of us separately can do something towards establishing the supremacy of mercy and tenderness. The use of Power shows the man. Towards everything weaker than ourselves we may be kind, trying to make every child and every animal happier. We may seek to be peace-makers among our equals, large-hearted and sweet-minded to all. It is often said justly, that the happiness of life is marred by small daily rubs: much may be done by each to avoid whatever needlessly frets another. The little Coral insects, acting for one end, build up walls which defy the waves of an ocean: so too the temperament of the millions, though singly weak, controuls sometimes the violence of the powerful.

And to return to the main thread of this discourse, if we wish to attain an abiding Joy, we must cultivate, as a fixed passion, desire for the welfare of others: not ambition, not vanity, not greed, not envy, not bigotry, not insane idolatry of a thing, a person, a family, an institution, a dogma. Some of these impulses may yield high joy, a fanatical but not a divine joy. But those who would "enter into the joy of their Lord;" the joy of HIM who is above anger and resentment, above partiality or any weakness, —such must cherish divine love and divine equanimity, side by side with a sober sense of their own insignificance. Then they will die, leaving the world better for their life; for they will have lived as co-workers with God in its purification and ennoblement.

THE NEW CRUSADES OF THE CHURCH FOR THE WORLD.

[1886.]

SECTION I.

WHAT IS HERE MEANT BY "THE CHURCH."

MANY persons cannot admit a division of mankind into the World and the Saints. They see in it nothing but intolerable and mischievous conceit. They call it ridiculous *priggishness* to imagine any "peculiar people of God:" and we need not feel surprize at it; so common among persons, whom perhaps it is impossible not to esteem, is the notion that without holding *their special creed*, no one can belong to the True Church of God; no one can be "a saint." But no weakness of good people, no mistake of judgment, no conceit, no unamiable arrogance, will annihilate existing facts. It is a fact, that out of a thousand persons taken at random are more than a few, in whom kindness *habitually* overcomes selfishness; and of these there are (at least among us) some who have *consciously* and *deliberately* devoted themselves to pursue *all* goodness and *all* virtue, as their reasonable service to God. In the language of Paul, these are "Fellow-Workers with God." It certainly is not rash to assume confidently that Man is created for virtue, and that the Creator designs the welfare of mankind *as a whole.* Those who in this sense seek to be servants of God, are (not unjustly) entitled "the peculiar people" of God, and his "invisible Church" (*ἐκκλησία*, [sacred] assembly); peculiar, because alas! they never have been a majority; invisible, in the sense that no visible clique, club, company or set of companies is commensurate with them. The conceit is lamentable, when any corporation or visible society says, or thinks, "The Temple of the Lord are we, and we alone:" nevertheless there exists, and eminently in our favoured land, a select number bound together by the unseen spiritual tie of supreme allegiance to God, as the rightful Lord, who loveth righteousness.

These are his *conscious* servants, and, in spite of the ignorance which generates bigotry, they are by no means without a certain Freemasonry, whereby one recognizes another. Moreover outside of these is a large margin of estimable persons who are God's *unconscious* servants, through the kindliness, generosity, and purity which predominate in their characters, even while they have no well-defined religion. If these to the eye of man have nothing saintly, yet at least they are saints in embryo; and where the public institutions favour virtue, they are (perhaps always) more numerous than the former class, and are an immense material aid that can scarcely be overvalued. However others may estimate these, the present writer does not class them with the "World" in opposition to the "Church;" not even when (perhaps from some intellectual reaction against errors of religion) they profess no religion at all. To *do* the will of God zealously, lovingly, though unconsciously, is far better than languid and inactive orthodoxy.—Thus by THE CHURCH in the Title of this tract those are meant who are actual Fellow-workers against vice and injustice, whether with conscious or unconscious religion; and by the World (as contrasted with the Church) are meant the Selfish, the Covetous, the Impure, the Unscrupulous, in whom lower impulses habitually overcome the higher, the benevolent, and the spiritual.

To be early in life aware that Mankind falls into these two classes, is in itself an instruction, indeed a beneficial incitement. Among the old Greeks, *Prodicus* produced his famous allegory, "The Choice of Hercules between Virtue and Vice." He aimed to set forth the contrast here pointed at; though the crude barbarism of Greek mythology did not allow him to shed over it the beautiful halo of Holiness and the inspiring sense of an Omnipresent Righteous Overseer, which *we* have learned in Jewish and Christian schools. Surely it is a glorious direction of ambition, in youth or in age alike, when the aspiration rises out of the depth of the heart,—"One thing have I desired of the Lord; that will I seek after; that I may be conscious of God's presence all the days of my life, and become his servant and fellow-worker."

SECTION II.

THE CHURCH IN AGONY.

FULL eight centuries before the Christian era Jerusalem was keenly aware of her religious superiority to her Gentile neighbours, whether Phœnician, Syrian or Egyptian. First perhaps in Egypt her commercial colonies began to propagate her higher faith. We have but glimpses of her proselyting; but these are enough to show, that as now in Africa Islâm is propagated by the zeal of private workmen and traders, so in Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, and finally in Rome, merchants and hucksters undermined the childish and impure Gentile mythology by preaching ONE HOLY AND MERCIFUL GOD. Not all the preachers could be equally wise and large-minded; some magnified the importance of Jewish ceremonies; but there is reason to believe that such were few. The proselytes in general remained outside the Jewish nation, though associated spiritually. Of course the teachers observed the Jewish sabbath, a fact which chiefly drew Gentile notice; but this ordinance was not enforced on proselytes. The salutary movement was arrested by Roman violence, which extinguished Judaism nationally and sold into slavery the poor remnant of the people. While we know little in detail of Jewish proselytism; we know that the prophet's mantle, torn from the Jewish back, fell on the shoulders of Christians,—who in the second generation were men of Gentile nationality.

But the battle was substantially the same. The question was between a mythology foul as well as puerile on the one side and a worship pure and ennobling on the other. Nature-Worship among Egyptians, Greeks, Syrians and Assyrians degenerated into impurity. Roman ferocity at first was of course unscrupulous and reckless of right and humanity; next quickly learned all the baser vices of the conquered.

Whatever of new Creed the Christian teachers inculcated, the end sought was not correct Opinion, but Virtuous Life; "to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among the sanctified." These words give in short summary a true and complete account of the noble Christian aim, while the primitive enthusiasm was fresh and unexhausted. But it was a struggle, an agony; of which the severity increased with the hatred of Romans to the Jewish nation.

Considering the magnitude of the task, the paucity of the first labourers in it, their feebleness in material aid, the vested interests opposed to them, also the haughty contempt in which the powerful held them, surely the measure of their success was remarkable. But as a river evaporates on running into torrid sands, so the expansion of the Christian Church wasted its vigour; first, because so many of the *illiterate* rushed into it, who were mentally unable to learn except through the church officers; whereby Sacerdotalism rapidly grew up: next, because their *more educated* converts were often tinged with Oriental or Platonic philosophy, whence diversities and strife about Doctrine arose. Instead of the simplicity of the Jewish Creed, an elaborate Theology ever becoming more complex distracted the early Church very injuriously from its purely spiritual welfare.

The primitive apostolic idea was not the improvement of the world,—which seemed far too great a task. Only Messiah descending from heaven armed with hosts of angels and flaming fire was equal to it. Until he should have dethroned the Demons in the air and disarmed the kings of the earth, no wide extension could be hoped for the kingdom of Heaven. In the short interval to precede this glorious event no more could be attempted than to rescue a *Select Remnant* of mankind,—those in whom the germ of spiritual desire was easily quickened, who therefore were regarded as predestined sharers in Messiah's triumph. In a State pervaded by idolatries, a State drenched in corruption and reckless of justice, Christians could not count themselves citizens, but with Paul said to themselves, "*Our Citizenship is in Heaven*, whence we look for the Saviour." We cannot tax them with want of patriotism, while they were politically helpless and almost outlaws. So pressing then was suffering or danger, so vast the problem of "improving the world," so soon did they expect all existing institutions to be swallowed in the reforms from heaven, so needful to the majority was the expectation of future reward for the renunciations required of them, that to censure them for thinking too much about the next world and too little of this would be foolish and heartless. *But times are changed.* Modern Christians have powers which the early Churches had not: and Duty varies with Power. The lapse of 1800 years sets before us demonstration that this world is not so short-lived as of old was thought; that to work for its future is not a throwing away of effort; in short, though each one seems insignificant amid the millions, yet moral force rightly directed on moral natures is not fruitless, and the duty of the Elect Remnant is to "leaven" the mass of the world. Hypocrisy now pays homage to virtue. Publicity puts wrong-doing to shame. Publicity is now acknowledged to be due to nations: among ourselves Free Speech and Free Press have a wide range. These facts give a vast political power to virtuous Churches. But a grave question arises: *do the Christian Churches use it effectively?* The Church, no longer in Agony, ought now to be the Church Militant.

SECTION III.

FIRST CRUSADE OF THIS CENTURY.

To cut a large question short, we may confine our outlook to the Protestants of England: then at once we see two sides, one doleful, the other encouraging. It is better to look at the brighter side, and thereby to cherish hope and animate effort. Kindness on a narrow scale was of course as old as any morality: Philanthropy on a large scale seems to have had its birth with John Howard, and was taken up by Christian Churches for the Negro race oppressed in the English plantations, when John Wesley had awakened our nation from torpor and sleep.

The Slave *Trade* was first attacked; in which Biblical Christians were aided by the fact that the trade was clearly *manstealing*, a crime denounced by name in St. Paul. When the Slave Trade had been effectually stopped (it never had been really* legal) a Biblical difficulty impeded the move against Slavery. This institution had existed under King Solomon; it is nowhere condemned in the New Testament; Paul sent back Onesimus into slavery, without rebuke to his master Philemon. Little progress was made in England (Sir George Stephen attested) even among the more zealous churches, until a Quaker lady, unabashed by the sacred letter, appealed to the more sacred spirit, and put forth the Axiom, "It is against Nature and Right, against primary Morality, to treat a man as a chattel." The Quakers and Baptists quickly adopted the principle; many from other Churches followed. Parliament quivered with the new enthusiasm, and found that from the steady lessening of the slave population and from the ever-increasing danger of insurrection, the plantations would soon be worthless. The zeal of good men and women for the RIGHT opened the eyes of worldly statesmen in 1833 as to the Inexpedient: hereby righteousness had a great triumph more than half a century ago. This was the *First Crusade* of the Nineteenth Century. Victory was bought, not by mutual slaughter, as in old crusades, but by peaceful pressure, humane pleas, and willing sacrifice of twenty millions sterling.

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* This fact is not generally known. The Act of 23 George II. generally quoted as legalizing the Slave Trade, merely sanctioned the bringing of labourers from Africa to our plantations, and *set penalties* on carrying them off by *fraud* or *force*. These clauses were disgracefully treated as dead letter by THE EXECUTIVE GOVERNMENT. No compensation could be legally due to planters when the source of their claim was illegal kidnapping. If our Executive had made Justice paramount, the slaves, not the masters, would have received "compensation."

The names of Granville Sharp, Clarkson and Wilberforce, also of several grand Quakers, will be transmitted with eminent honour as leaders in this humanitarian war.

SECTION IV.

SECOND CRUSADE.

Forthwith (in 1834) the foundation was laid of a Second Crusade against Intoxicating Drink by an Oriental traveller, Mr. James Silk Buckingham, then Member for Sheffield. The trade in "Ardent Spirits" was condemned by a Parliamentary Committee, but in vain; for every Cabinet was resolute to do nothing against the evil: nay, promoted it, not only at home, but in the Levant, in India and elsewhere. Our high politicians consistently connived at smuggling Opium into China, and at length enforced by war its reception, against the Chinese Emperor's protest. To this day no repentance is shown of the double iniquity.—But in 1853 a Quaker again took the lead (a Mr. Nathaniel Card), confronting the idolatry of wealth and the apathy of a materialistic Government. Like Neal Dow in America, he struck against licensing the open sale of intoxicating drink. For this purpose he founded the United Kingdom Alliance, to be supported by all who disapproved of free and open sale at bars and tipple-houses. Societies for *dissuading* the drink had existed here for near twenty years, (somewhat earlier in the American Union), but now the movement became *political*, as it was already in the State of Maine. Many earnest hearts rallied to the New Alliance; Sir Walter Trevelyan became its President, the father of the present Sir Wilfrid Lawson joined it; so did a generous Lord Harrington, and before long Lord Brougham *talked* for it and called it the *Grand* Alliance. But its strength lay chiefly for a long time in the Dissenting Churches, though a few ministers of the State Church were active workers for it. Catholics and Protestants have warmly co-operated. At length Archdeacon Sandford brought the question of Drunkard-making into the Convocation of Canterbury. By gradual progress in thirty-three years the movement against the existing system (which Statesmen have diligently upheld *ever since Parliament made it profitable to the Exchequer)* has become strictly national. But to this day the animating spirit has been from the religious heart of the Churches, while the opponents have been the classes which sympathize more with the wealth of capitalists than with public morality. Intoxicating Drink is the greatest factor of crime, pauperism, orphanhood, prostitution, disease, and insanity. No one is fit to be a citizen who does not preserve his *brain* in a normal state. No police can distinguish when a man who has been drinking is in a legal estimate *drunk.* A drinker is most formidable before he is downright drunk; therefore tipple-shops are eminently dangerous to a community. Rural squires have long acted on this conviction, for their own comfort; but ministers of State merely talk against the shops, and will not act against them: nay, they continue to force them on the helpless Hindoos and Mussulmans of India, hereby forbidding us to make charitable excuse for their conduct in the United Kingdom. Happily the *Churches* of the three kingdoms are now united in force against our fatuous politicians. Sir Wilfrid Lawson has long been the leader of the Second Crusade. Not only the ecclesiastically religious now support him, but nearly the whole of those who esteem Virtue more than Pelf, who would not reject the motto, "Fiat *Sanctitas*, ruat cælum." The battle is virtually a Crusade of the true Church for the benefit of the World, and for the protection of the poorer from the invasion of debauchery.

SECTION V.

THIRD CRUSADE.

In 1869 the Churches of England first learned the deadly and awful fact that by stealthy intrigue, by fraudful title of Bills, by omission of Preamble, by midnight voting and by conspiracy of silence, foul and despotic Acts had been enacted, with the object of providing "safe harlots" for celibate soldiers, and indulgence to other male profligates. The women (who prevalently are brought into this sad life by the wickedness of others, or by pauperism and ignorance) are made public slaves and treated as brute animals, or, as a defender of the Acts avows, as sewers to be cleansed. This horror pierced the hearts of English ladies and tore out from them "chaste-eyed shame." Indignation and Pity for their wronged sisters called them out into stern and holy protest before the public eye. The medical men of Nottingham had sounded an alarm, and *on medical grounds* had denounced the whole proceeding. Of these Dr. Charles Bell Taylor was the chief leader. Other men, not a few, were aghast at the infamy: but the alliance of women was invaluable. Women without votes appealed to men who had votes, and stood forth bravely to endure the gibes of an insolent press and more insolent medical practitioners and students. Who could have expected Physicians to import heresy from a continental materialistic school? the heresy that male chastity in celibates is ruinous to health, and that women must be made foul slaves for the convenience of unmarried men. Ancient Heathens, often profligates, yet consistently taught that youthful Chastity was a main factor of health and strength; that so too was abstinence from intoxicating drink: but our modern wiseacres hold that Science has changed all that.

Earliest among matrons, Josephine Butler and Ursula Bright became eminent in a new Crusade. To the former, as to a natural leader, Christian ladies of every rank have rallied with wonderful deference. She has carried the sacred war into the continent. Eminently in Switzerland, Italy and Germany allies have joined it. Others have propagated it into the American Union. It has become requisite to meet the foul medical lie in India and all the English dependencies; so corrupt or so credulous are the classes which rule England. Again the Churches of Britain, including the Catholics, have done valiant service. The wicked Acts have been now twice condemned by Resolution of the Commons, and a third Crusade of holy indignation is about shortly to conquer.

SECTION VI.

FOURTH CRUSADE.

PERHAPS a move against Harlotry *as such* was to be expected, as in fit antagonism to the gross attack on Family Life, made by our demoralized rulers, ignorant that they are driving back into mere barbarism. But so various and wide is their misrule, that minds, talents and surplus money are otherwise pre-occupied. A Crusade against any Public maintenance of Harlots or Revenue to be obtained by licensing them, or any Regulation to give them sanction, is certain to follow, as soon as actual Repeal of the existing base law is obtained. An "Augean stable" has to be cleansed; and now that *Womanhood is militant* against impurity, new Voluntary Unions of great promise are set on foot. Meanwhile new foes lurking in ambuscade have been detected, and a Fourth Crusade of great magnitude is earnestly begun,—by the Church, for the benefit indeed of the world. Party-ties must be snapped and scorned, for protection of poor, young and innocent girls, who by fraud and force are carried into foul slavery and ruin. Our high-minded Cabinets seem resolved to shelter fiendish men and women in their execrable crimes. The epithets here added are deliberately used, and can (alas!) be justified abundantly. Here it must suffice to mention, that in 1881 and 1882 it was notorious and *was avowed in the House of Lords* that English girls were carried into Belgium and sold (price quoted, £12 for a young virgin), yet Midsummer 1885 was reached without any activity of our police or any sharpening of law for girls' protection. This is the *first terrible fact.* A *second* is, that when a Mrs. Jefferies was prosecuted for practising the trade of procuress, the magistrate shut the mouths of witnesses by inducing her to plead Guilty, and imposed on her a mere fine of money which was easily paid. No ministerial censure of the magistrate was heard. Minehan, an honest police inspector, who had refused Mrs. Jefferies's bribes, and by whose faithful information the prosecution became possible, was rebuked and disgraced. Thus far the "Liberal" Government was to blame. *Third* fact. When Mr. Stead by bravely personating a rich profligate was able to reveal the crimes perpetrated against young innocent girls, the police seized his printed papers, under the pretence that his revelations were obscene! Fierce indignation against him raged in the London newspapers of both parties; which culminated in a prosecution of him for *Abduction* by the Attorney-General with money supplied by the Queen's Exchequer. The Magistrate in Bow street and the Judge at the Old Bailey behaved with marked hostility to him, stopping his mouth from free and just defence. The expense cast on him was £5,000. He was condemned to imprisonment. His Judge was quickly promoted, whether because of, or in spite of his hostility. No use has been made *to this day* of Minehan's knowledge and zeal to detect the criminals who steal young girls; and the Government when pressed to prosecute, coolly replied, "they had no evidence." Yet they eagerly prosecuted men and women who had actively thrown light on heinous criminality.* Surely with these hard facts hard epithets are appropriate. Cabinets of both colours, Liberal and Tory, are implicated: the sooner Parties and Party Government are renounced, the better. A man who is publicly elected to legislate is bound to vote according to his best knowledge of what is Just and Right, quite as much as is a juror: yet in the morals of

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* This prosecution was from the *Tory* Government: but as the *Methodist Times* remarked:—"The country has just been moved to its very depths by an intense desire to protect little girls . . . . But in the midst of national anguish and of unprecedented yearnings for better things, *all the Liberal leaders* have maintained an absolute, a disgraceful and a calamitous silence."

Party he is expected to vote as may be the convenience of a Minister. The notion is as immoral as any defence of a juror's false verdict for a similar convenience. A wrongful Act of Parliament may cause evil a hundred-fold worse than any false Verdict. This Fourth Crusade is only in its beginning; but it will undoubtedly be carried on, though it strikes against crime, even more than against vice. Foreign girls are entrapped into England, where they are helpless, equally as are English girls entrapped into foreign parts.

SECTION VII.

A FIFTH MOST NECESSARY CRUSADE.

The Churches do not yet understand the greatness of their task. The foul Contagious Diseases Acts, not yet repealed,* were smuggled through to provide the Queen's *soldiers* and the Queen's *sailors* with safe harlots. These fighting men, without wives or home, bound to fight and kill and burn and ravage at the word of command, wholly blind and reckless whether the cause be *just or unjust*, *without Verdict of Jury*, or *Sentence of Judge*, or *any Public Process directed to secure Justice*, are presumed TO HAVE NO CONSCIENCES, but only brute appetites; and not to have that moderation of appetite, which natural instinct gives to the brutes.

But what does Christianity, what does Common Justice, say to an engagement to kill and ravage *without any Sacred Verdict?* What is it but a league of Brigandage and Marauding? Until the days of Constantine the Great, historians find no instance of a man, who *after* conversion to Christianity, consented to take the military engagement. Gibbon tells of a young Christian, who fixedly refused, and was beheaded for it. Who can even guess, how vastly different would now be the state of Christendom, if the leaders of the Churches had persevered in holding this front of protest against hiring oneself as a blind tool for deeds of violence and slaughter? "Be not partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure," said Paul: but "let slip the dogs of war, when a secret Cabinet bids you," says the immoral Politician. However, under Constantine, as patron of cruelly-oppressed Christians, other Christians took arms, and from this era soldiers who are accepted as Christians have rivalled the unscrupulous wars of ambitious and heartless Paganism.

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* *Now* (1887) repealed, wherever our Parliament has power; but scandalously upheld wherever the Queen's ministers can act over helpless foreigners under the name of the Queen's despotism, or by might of her invading arms.

In modern days Quakers first raised protest against the monstrous doctrine in which the Churches of Luther, Cranmer and John Knox had found nothing un-Christian. The Quakers here, as in some other matters, were right and strong in the SPIRIT, but weak in argument as soon as they reasoned from the *letter.* Let us not waste time and energy in wrangling with men whose heart is right and their alliance very valuable. But the evil which from English ground it is most obvious to attack, is, the principle of having one law of Right and Justice for our own people, another for the foreigner. Of Lynch law at home we have sincere abhorrence; but Lynch law is the only law by which soldiers are pledged to deal with foreigners. More words on this topic may here be premature; but one thing is certain: until our barbarian War practices are *transformed* into International Police under Sacred Constraints, until we abstain from terrorizing maritime cities by war-ships,—our Prosperity is rotten, our Foreign Relations are based on Might, not Right; and our National professions of Virtue will always, as now, be interpreted by foreign critics as Tyranny veiled in Hypocrisy.

APPENDIX.

The following has been sent to me from an unknown quarter. It is a valuable support to my last topic.

THE CHURCH AND THE WAR.

IN comparing the influence of the Christian Church now, in regard to war, with what it was in the days of the peace-loving early Christians and martyrs, and even in a much later age, there is a difference to be observed, which is not to the advantage of the modern professors of the faith of the New Testament.

An accurate historian, Mr. J. A. Farrer, remarks:—"In these respects it must be plain to every one that the attitude and power of the Church have entirely changed. She has stood apart, more and more, as time has gone on, from her great opportunities, as a promoter of peace. Her influence, it is notorious, no longer counts for anything, where it was once so powerful, in the fields of negotiation and reconcilement." This is a formidable indictment; but unfortunately, from time to time, events show that there is too much foundation for it.

In the miserable War in Egypt and the Soudan, in which England is now entangled, with so great a loss of life, of treasure, and of reputation, the voices of the most influential leaders of the Churches, and of the National Church in particular, have in general rendered no help either to the people or to the Government, but, on the contrary, have rather tended to mislead both. Even men from whom, more than from others, really good counsel might have been looked for, have acted in a manner calculated to disappoint those who expected utterances from them in the spirit of the Divine Founder of the Christian religion.

For instance, there may be noted the Bishop of Liverpool, Dr. Ryle. For more than a generation he has taken a foremost place, as a leader of what is called the "Evangelical" party in the Church of England. "Ryle's Tracts," of which millions have been scattered over the world, have become household words for plain, forcible expositions of Gospel truth, many or most of them being unquestionably excellent in spirit and in doctrine. And yet their author is the man, of all others, who, when advanced to the episcopal throne, orders his clergy to put up prayers in every church in his diocese, "for our brethren, *Thy servants*, now fighting the battles of our country in Egypt." And, nearly at the same time, at a meeting of the Church Pastoral-Aid Society held in Liverpool, he publicly found fault with the Gladstone Government for not being sufficiently vigorous in their Soudan operations, but for being "always too late, too late," and for what he was pleased to term "fumbling and fumbling with the Egyptian question."

To say nothing of the absence, in such utterances, of Christian sentiment, or anything akin to the charitable and merciful spirit of the Gospel, they are in marked inaccordance with historic truth and plain facts. The Egyptians, crushed into the dust under a most despotic taxation for the profit of foreign bondholders and of profligate native officials, tried to throw off this intolerable yoke. England made herself the tool of both bondholders and officials, and first bombarded Alexandria and then crushed the wretched little Egyptian army at Tel-el-Kebir. In like manner, she has waged war, at terrible cost to herself however, with the Soudanese, because they rose in revolt against Egyptian governors who violated their women, tortured their men, and perpetrated all manner of atrocity and cruelty in the regions of the Upper Nile. And yet, forsooth, the things which have happened are to be looked upon as a divinely "ordained judgment on the Egyptian!" Can ecclesiastical unwisdom go further than in such declarations?

It is abundantly evident that, on the peace question, the clergy and ministers of the Gospel need to be further educated by the laity, and reminded of what are "the first principles of the oracles of God." In almost every place this need exists. And the friends of peace can scarcely render better aid to the cause they love than to devise and carry into effect additional means for influencing their neighbouring preachers on this question. By personal intercourse and conversation—by private correspondence and letters in the local journals, and by the distribution of literature embodying sound views and principles on the subject—much good may be done.

There can be little doubt but that if, during the difficulties with Egypt, the voice of the Churches had been raised to any considerable extent in the way of peaceful protest and suggestion, the Government would have been greatly strengthened to oppose that portion of the public who are always crying out for the exercise of a rash and overbearing policy of intimidation, or force. But the Church in general, has been silent; and the country is suffering and being led grievously astray, in consequence. The course of recent events furnishes a grave warning and a strong stimulus, in regard to the use of every practicable opportunity for exerting individual, as well as combined influence, to counteract such tendencies in the future, and to invite the alliance, in this direction, of Christian ministers in particular.

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I take this opportunity of making six corrections in Vol. I:

p. 74, *for* James V *read* James IV.
p. 158, line 7, *for* civilization *read* cultivation.
p. 175, line 4, *for* courts *read* counts.
p. 211, line 18, *for* eastern *read* western.
p. 243, line 9, *for* distinctly *read* distinctively.
p. 334, line 4, *for* years *read* wars.

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